



Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

04-05 ANNUAL REPORT



Honorable Bob Riley
Governor of Alabama
State Capitol
Montgomery, AL 36130



Dear Governor Riley:

I am pleased to submit the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2004-2005. As you will see, the Department was involved in many projects during the year.

We continue to find more efficient ways to communicate and conduct business with our constituents. Many functions are now available through the Department's Web site, www.outdooralabama.com. Hunting and fishing licenses may be instantly purchased and over-night platforms on the Bartram Canoe Trail can be reserved, just to name two options.

Education is a major function of the Department. Last year more than 31,506 persons successfully completed the Basic Boating Course; approximately 300 women completed the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Program; the Community Fishing Program conducted 63 events with over 11,378 participants; and the Youth Dove Hunting Program included 31 sites across the state with approximately 1,395 participants. Approximately 10,200 people completed the hunter education certification during the year.

Work continues on renovations at several of Alabama's state parks. Of note this year was the reopening of 100 campsites at Gulf State Park and the renovated golf course and pro shop at Oak Mountain State Park. At one point, more than 1,500 Hurricane Katrina evacuees were living in Federal Emergency Management Agency trailers at several state parks, and some remain there.

Six additional tracts of land totaling 4,365 acres were purchased during the fiscal year by the Forever Wild Land Trust. The Walls of Jericho Forever Wild Tract in Jackson County was dedicated and opened and the Shoal Creek Preserve Forever Wild Tract in Lauderdale County was opened for public use.

One of the fastest growing forms of outdoor recreation is bird watching. The North Alabama Birding Trail opened for visitors in September 2005 after more than four years of planning, development and construction. Nine trail kiosks and over 300 interpretive, highway directional, and site wayfinding signs were constructed and erected. A 32-page trail visitor guide was completed and distributed, and a Web page was also developed. Initial feedback and comments from visitors are very positive.

I am extremely proud of the Department's accomplishments and I appreciate your support and leadership to the State of Alabama.

Sincerely,

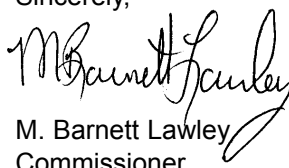

M. Barnett Lawley
Commissioner

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Department Overview

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is an executive and administrative department of the State of Alabama created by statute. The Commissioner, appointed by the Governor as a member of his cabinet, advises the Governor and Legislature on management of freshwater fish, wildlife, marine resources, waterway safety, state lands, state parks, and other natural resources.

Scope of Operations

The Department's scope of operations includes the administration, management and maintenance of 22 state parks, 23 public fishing lakes, three freshwater fish hatcheries, 34 wildlife management areas, two waterfowl refuges, two wildlife sanctuaries, a mariculture center with 35 ponds, and 645,000 acres of trust lands managed for the benefit of several state agencies, the General Fund and Alabama Trust Fund. Other departmental functions include maintenance of a State Land Resource Information Center and administration of the Forever Wild land acquisition program.

Organization

During Fiscal Year 2005, the Department had five operational divisions and seven support sections. The operational divisions were Marine Police, Marine Resources, State Lands, State Parks and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. Support sections were Accounting, Diversity and Recruiting, Engineering, Information and Education, Information Technology, Legal, and Personnel and Payroll. The Commissioner was advised by a 10-member Conservation Advisory Board appointed by the Governor. Division directors managed the Department's programs under their jurisdiction through authority delegated by the Legislature and the commissioner. Concerted efforts were made to balance needs and requirements against resources and available funding to satisfy present and future public and resource requirements. Active public education and voluntary participation programs were expanded and new plans were implemented to achieve maximum multiple-use benefits consistent with resource conservation.

Department Goals

The Department's major goal is to promote the statewide stewardship and enjoyment of Alabama's natural resources, and to ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy these resources.

Funding

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources receives no general fund support. Funding for the Department is generated through special revenues, which include federal money, cigarette taxes, user and license fees, mandated interest from endowment and federal regulations. The Forever Wild Program received interest income from the Alabama Trust Fund. Specific revenue sources for the five operational divisions are as follows:

Marine Police: Boat registration fees, fines, marine gas tax and federal grants.

Marine Resources: Saltwater fishing licenses, fines, marine gas tax and federal grants. Marine Resources also has an endowment, but it has not grown enough as of date to enhance operations.

State Lands: Management fees from the sale of timber, minerals and various leases on state lands administered under the Land Based Asset Management Program. Further, the division receives additional federal grants which support specific programs.

State Parks: User-generated funds in the form of entrance, rental, lodging, golf and other recreational fees. State Parks received a modest amount of funding from cigarette tax revenue.

Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries: Fishing and hunting licenses and permits; fines; waterfowl stamps; federal allocations from excise taxes on sporting arms, ammunition, archery gear and some fishing tackle; and federal grants. Interest income, although at slightly declining interest rates, continues to be generated by the Game and Fish endowment fund for resident lifetime hunting and fishing licenses. Direct donations and voluntary state income tax refund check-offs for the Nongame Wildlife Program continue to decrease from previous fiscal years.

CONSERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

The Conservation Advisory Board, created by statute, is composed of 10 members appointed by the governor for alternating terms of six years, and three ex-officio members in the persons of the Governor, the Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries, and the Director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. The Commissioner of Conservation and Natural Resources serves as the ex-officio secretary of the board.

The Advisory Board assists in formulating policies for the Department of Conservation, examines all rules and regulations and makes recommendations for their change or amendment. By a two-thirds vote of the members present

and with the Governor's approval, the board can amend, make any changes, repeal or create and promulgate additional rules and regulations. The Board also assists in publicizing the Department's programs and activities.

Meetings:

The Advisory Board met three times during FY 2005:

February 12, 2005 at the State Capitol in Montgomery

March 12, 2005 at Joe Wheeler State Park in Rogersville

May 21, 2005 at the Talladega Superspeedway in Talladega.

Conservation Advisory Board Members as of September 30, 2005

Members	Home Town	Term Expires
Dan Moultrie, Chairman	Birmingham	March 28, 2009
Louis Coles	Enterprise	March 28, 2009
George Harbin	Gadsden	May 20, 2011
Bill Hatley	Gulf Shores	May 20, 2011
Johnny Johnson	Tuscaloosa	March 28, 2009
W. Grant Lynch	Talladega	May 9, 2007
Wayne May	Eutaw	March 28, 2009
James W. Porter, II	Birmingham	May 9, 2007
Ross Self	Gulf Shores	March 28, 2009
Warren Strickland	Huntsville	May 20, 2011

Ex-officio Members

Bob Riley, Governor

Gaines Smith, Auburn University Cooperative Extension System Director

Ron Sparks, Department of Agriculture and Industries Commissioner

Ex-officio Secretary of the Board

M. Barnett Lawley, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Commissioner

Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources



2004-2005 Budgets and Expenditures for Administrative Division

Section	Budgeted Amounts	Actual Expenditures
Accounting	\$780,272	\$627,793
Auditing	\$235,542	\$140,439
Commissioner's Office	\$677,287	\$525,531
Diversity	\$240,728	\$128,919
Engineering	\$1,732,078	\$1,467,286
Information & Education	\$974,439	\$938,863
Information Technology	\$1,011,335	\$961,265
Legal	\$907,294	\$698,466
License	\$294,304	\$209,652
Personnel & Payroll	\$733,740	\$571,892
Warehouse	\$130,073	\$132,956
Totals	\$7,717,092	\$6,403,062

Administrative Division

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

The Commissioner is the executive officer of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and provides overall direction and guidance for carrying out the Governor's directives and implementing enacted legislation. The Commissioner establishes goals, policies and directions; approves programs and budgets; delegates authority; and provides support to administer the Department efficiently and effectively.

The Chief of Operations acts as liaison to the Alabama Legislature and other state agencies and serves as the Department's chief of staff. Two support personnel assist the Commissioner and Operations Chief.

The Commissioner's administrative staff includes seven sections that provide administrative support for the Commissioner and the Department's operational divisions. The administrative support sections are Accounting, Diversity and Recruiting, Engineering, Information and Education, Information Technology, Legal, and Personnel and Payroll. The operational divisions fund the Commissioner's office and administrative staff.

ACCOUNTING

The Accounting Section is the central clearinghouse for all departmental financial data. Accounting maintains and records all receipts and disbursements for the commissioner's office, staff sections and each of the five operating divisions. Accounting is responsible for six internal functions: General Accounting, Auditing, Budgeting, Administrative Procurement, Hunting and Fishing License Sales and Reporting, and Agency Office Supplies/Central Mail.

General Accounting includes daily deposits of departmental funds, recording of all expenditures, preparation of monthly financial reports and statements, development of fiscal policies and procedures, reconciliation, coordination and preparation of the annual budget request.

Auditing is responsible for auditing all Conservation Department funds, including royalty and commission contracts. Additionally, the section performs fiscal audits of the individual state parks.

Procurement provides purchasing assistance to each administrative section.

Hunting and Fishing License Sales and Reporting is responsible for revenues totaling over \$15 million annually.

Agency Office Supplies and Central Mail maintains a central supply room for daily office supply needs. One accounting staff member maintains the central mailroom.

Accomplishments

Central Accounting's audit personnel continue to assist the State's attorneys in litigation efforts against Exxon Mobil and helps monitor the royalty practices of all offshore producers. Both the State of Alabama and Exxon prepared and submitted appellant briefs to the Alabama Supreme Court during the year. The court has not yet set a date for oral arguments.

Central Accounting's audit personnel have teamed with management to begin a comprehensive review of the business practices at the state parks.

The Internet and agent point-of-sale system continues to be a success. Thirty-six percent of the 604 license agents are electronic and sell 56 percent of licenses.

Future Plans

Currently there are several automated license systems and a manual system. It is anticipated that all license sales will be fully automated within the next two to three years.

Although the automated systems are allowing the capture of demographic information of users of the state's recreational resources, consolidation of the information and retrieval mechanisms must be devised. Without such action, the automated system will be unable to provide valuable statistics for management, contact resources to find out user needs or concerns, and provide feedback on current and ongoing projects.

The Boat Registration Section of the Marine Police Division will be transferred to the Administrative Division, Central Accounting Section effective October 1, 2005. This transfer will be initiated in order to assist in automating boat registration renewals. The first year will be limited to renewals that are correct in their entirety.

DIVERSITY AND RECRUITING

The Diversity and Recruiting Section develops and implements programs designed to increase the pool of qualified applicants needed to hire and promote a work force that reflects the cultural and ethnic diversity of the state of Alabama. This section maintains the department's Affirmative Employment Plan, does statewide recruiting, and contracts diversity training for the Department.

Accomplishments

The Natural Resources Law Enforcement Training program combined Internet and classroom meetings to introduce urban students to natural resources law enforcement.

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	DCNR Total ACTUAL 2005-2006	DCNR Total BUDGETED 2006-2007	DCNR Total REQUESTED 2005-2006
Number of Employees	1,231	1,448	1,477
Unencumbered Cash Balance Forward	\$28,502,467	\$26,601,835	\$21,999,933
Total Federal Funding	24,148,851	20,957,054	21,662,000
Hunting Licenses	8,393,472	8,523,198	8,520,996
Fishing Licenses	5,856,480	6,236,008	6,184,875
Land Management Fees	5,703,964	6,000,000	6,000,000
User Fees	16,238,809	25,200,000	25,594,774
Boat Registration	3,719,085	3,650,000	3,750,000
Timber Sales	1,044,572	760,000	760,000
Fines	740,064	835,000	740,000
Trust Fund Interest	0	0	0
Other	6,043,540	3,207,855	2,667,331
Total Departmental Related Receipts	47,739,986	54,412,061	54,217,976
Cigarette Tax	3,480,337	3,500,000	3,500,000
Gasoline Tax	3,685,214	3,570,000	3,650,000
Use Tax Discount Cap	1,023,007	1,561,961	2,290,195
Sales Tax Discount Cap	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
General Fund			
(Jeff Co. Recreational Facility-Pass Through)	0	0	0
DCNR Transfers	50,000	50,000	50,000
Forever Wild Land	275,000	375,000	375,000
Total Other Receipts	13,513,558	14,056,961	14,865,195
Administrative Transfer	6,788,467	8,200,467	8,299,623
Actual All Receipts	92,190,862	97,626,543	99,044,794
Total BFY Expenditures	94,091,494	102,228,445	110,580,807
Revenues verses Expenditures			
Over (Under)	-1,900,632	-4,601,902	-11,536,013
Unencumbered Cash Balance Forward	\$26,601,835	\$21,999,933	\$10,463,920

The experimental class combined in-person conservation departmental experts with the criminal justice and technology staff of Auburn University Montgomery and used the Internet to deliver a cutting edge technology driven model that is offered to recruit/train students at Auburn University Montgomery, Troy State University Montgomery, Alabama State University, and Tuskegee University. The class will be available in 2006 as an Internet only class through Auburn University Montgomery and will be available to interested students anywhere. We believe that it will become the most effective recruiting tool that we have used for AUM and the Alabama Department of Conservation.

Future Plans

- Continue developing statewide recruiting using field employees as a recruiting resource.
- Develop partnerships with elementary, junior high, and high schools through our Adopt a School program; increase awareness in urban school districts of careers in conservation, and provide a link to outdoor recreational opportunities available in the state of Alabama.
- Enlarge our college internship program to include most four-year schools in Alabama where logistically possible.
- Maintain our commitment to the Student Aide Program.
- Maintain our commitment to the Welfare to Work partnership with the Alabama Department of Human Resources.
- Continue the Natural Resources Law Enforcement Training program to include instructors from Alabama State University, Auburn University Montgomery, Alabama A&M University, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region IV, U.S. Treasury Department's ATF Division, and instructors from the Department of Conservation's five operating divisions.
- Provide diversity training for managers and employees on a continuing basis.
- Increase community input into the Conservation diversity committee working group.
- Continue to work with the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and our Legal Section to get an approved Affirmative Employment Plan.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

The Information and Education Section provides information, education and outreach services for the Department. Informational services include print and electronic media such as *Outdoor Alabama* magazine for paid subscribers; *Outdoor Alabama* television, which airs weekly; news releases distributed to state and national media outlets; brochures; press kits; and special video productions.

Educational services include comprehensive K-12 conservation education curricula and teacher training programs; in-school conservation programs; and hands-on field trips for students. Last year 244 educators completed in-service workshops offered by the Department.

Outreach services include the Governor's One-Shot Turkey Hunt; STEP OUTSIDE, a mentor-based program to introduce newcomers to hunting, fishing and other nature-based recreation; and Becoming an Outdoors-Woman weekend seminars.

In addition, I&E provided public relations and publishing consultation as well as editorial, proofreading, and copy writing service for departmental staff; responded to information requests from the public, media and other agencies; drafted communiqués for department administrators and the Governor's office; coordinated special projects; and acted as liaison to the Governor's Press Office.



Facilities and Personnel

I&E had 12 authorized and filled positions during FY 2004-2005: a Biologist IV who served as section chief; a Public Information Manager who served as managing editor; one Public Information Specialist II and one Public Information Specialist I who served as staff writers; one Artist-Illustrator II and one Artist-Illustrator I who served as graphic artists; two Conservation Education Specialists who coordinated workshops within assigned regions; one Audio-Visual Specialist III, one Audio-Visual Specialist II and one Audio-Visual Specialist I who served as videographers and video editors; and two Administrative Support Assistant IIIs.



Accomplishments

I&E provided service, material and/or coordination for promotion of the Governor's One-Shot Turkey Hunt, state-wide youth wildlife art contests, Becoming an Outdoors Woman workshops, Beyond BOW ladies' deer hunts, and STEP OUTSIDE Youth Dove Hunts and many other special projects. Photographic and audiovisual services were provided as needed.

Outdoor Alabama magazine published five issues including the annual Calendar and Conservation Directory. Subscriptions continued to grow thanks to promotions targeted at potential new subscribers and the option of purchasing subscriptions online with a credit card. Online hunting and fishing license purchasers were also offered the option of subscribing within the same transaction for the first time.

The Outdoor Alabama Nature Shop became available online offering products that range from wildlife pins to t-shirts, books and toys.

In addition to being broadcast on The Outdoor Channel, the *Outdoor Alabama* television show was syndicated on stations in Birmingham, Montgomery, Mobile and Columbus, Georgia.

Future Plans

- Video footage for the *Outdoor Alabama* television show will continue to be captured for future shows and other video needs throughout the Department.

- *Outdoor Alabama* magazine will continue working to increase the number of paid subscriptions to the magazine through a variety of promotional projects.
- Several Outdoor Alabama Expos are planned for different parts of the state during the next fiscal year.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology Section provides computer hardware, software and networking services for the Department. Hardware services include set-up and installation of new desktop and notebook computers, management of departmental servers, and installation and support for printers, monitors and scanners.

Software services include new web-based application development, analysis, design and support for the Department's E-Gov applications, support for all mainframe applications, including ad hoc reporting from the accounting and personnel systems, and support and maintenance of the Department Web site.

Networking services include support for all wired and wireless technologies used throughout the Department.

Facilities and Personnel

Information Technology staff of eight includes an IT Manager, Programmer/Analysts, Systems Specialists and

Technicians. During FY05, a contract position was used to assist with E-Gov application design and support.

Accomplishments

Information Technology provided service, coordination, consultation and support for many Department projects including the Hunting and Fishing License Point of Sale system, the Marine Resources Point of Sale system, the Hunter Education online registration system, the Oak Mountain Archery Hunt, the Unified Citation application and the Outdoor Alabama Web site. Significant improvement was made in streamlining production and ad hoc mainframe jobs.

Support was also provided for the new statewide email system. Over 80 percent of current Department addresses were converted during FY05 in conjunction with hardware and software updates necessary to accommodate the conversion. Two new servers were brought online to provide centralized anti-virus updates and file backup.

Future Plans

- Continue to develop web-based applications to provide better public access and reduce paper-driven processes.
- Research of document management systems, including document imaging, is underway. Implementation is expected during latter FY06 and early FY07.
- Research possible uses of wireless technologies in the State Parks, Enforcement, and the district offices.
- Develop an online Boat Registration Renewal system.

LEGAL

The Legal Section provides advice and counsel directly to the Commissioner and Operations Chief, and as a staff function, provides legal services to the directors of the five operational divisions and other Department staff.

The drafting of contracts, deeds, leases, patents, permits and attorney general opinions are also responsibilities of the Legal Section. Litigation against the Department and employees as well as litigation initiated by the Department is handled by the legal staff.

The Legal Section drafts, reviews and monitors legislation affecting the Department. Regulations for management and enforcement efforts of divisions are drafted and approved for execution and followed through the adoption process. The section is responsible for real estate transactions involving land owned or managed by the Department and for the legal work association with the state's oil and gas leasing activity.

PERSONNEL AND PAYROLL

The Personnel and Payroll Section provides personnel-related support services to the Commissioner's office, Division Directors, and Section Chiefs.

The section serves as liaison to the State Personnel Department for DCNR's personnel actions and activities.

The section is responsible for processing all payrolls, as well as maintaining all employee files and payroll records, for the Department's hourly and bi-weekly personnel.

Future Plans

The section is committed to continuing to provide payroll and personnel support services throughout the Department.

Engineering

The Engineering Section provides professional planning and programming, engineering, architectural, landscape architectural, surveying and related administrative services to the various divisions of the department. These professional services best protect the state's natural resources by providing parks, recreational opportunities and services. The section's professional staff of engineers, architects, landscape architect and land surveyors ensures that solutions to conservation planning and programming, design and construction problems and the development of departmental projects are integrated with ecologically functional and aesthetic aspects within the confines of economic feasibility.

Facilities and Personnel

The Engineering Section had 20 employees during FY 2004-2005: one Chief of Engineering Services, one Architect II, one Professional Land Surveyor III, one Conservation Engineer I, one Landscape Architect, one Design Technician Supervisor, one Professional Land Surveyor I/II, one Clerk Stenographer III, one Conservation Construction Inspector I, three Land Survey Technicians, three Design Technicians, one Survey Assistant, three Utility Laborers and one retired state employee. The section's facilities are located in Montgomery and Oak Mountain State Park.

Significant Accomplishments

The Engineering Section continued to provide on site professional and technical support with the advent of hurricane Ivan in September 2004 and again with the extensive damage caused by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 and coordinated with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, local communities and other federal, state and local agencies in the cleanup and reconstruction of storm-devastated facilities. Over \$10 million in contracts related to storm events was initiated and coordinated in this fiscal year.

Engineering Section programs consist of providing the necessary professional expertise required to reach department goals. These programs include capital and improve-

ment, using both out-sources and in-house design and in-house construction, master planning and site planning for department facilities. General technical assistance is also performed including construction document preparation, project status reports, annual reports, replies to correspondence, feasibility studies, advisement on proper repair and operation manuals, providing file information, technical field assistance, emergency project involvement, dam inspections, specification writing for material and equipment purchases, field maintenance and training assistance.

Engineering was also involved with surveying assistance and technical advice on construction projects boundaries and property corners for State Parks, delineation and location of oyster reefs, public access areas, wildlife management areas, public lakes and other state managed property. Approximately 30 percent of Engineering Section time was spent on technical assistance of a general nature involving various Department activities requiring engineering input.

The Engineering Section prepared new and updated management area maps, updated and produced new park trail maps and completed numerous banners, posters, retirement certificates and appreciation awards. The section continued communication between Department of Transportation and Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for the purpose of relaying digital information and continued the process of converting state maps, state park boundaries and wildlife management areas, new state park brochure/map and other related data to digital form. The section produced a digital archive of record plans and maps that previously was only in paper format. This digital archival record includes files produced dating back to in the early 1800s, through CCC plans and present-day projects.

The Engineering Section assisted the commissioner's office and the State Parks Division in the advertising for, and selection of private architectural/engineering firms to prepare documents for the State Parks Restoration Program. The section remains as a coordinating liaison between the Department of Conservation and these private firms to communicate the needs of the Department and to ensure their inclusion into the completed plans.

Administrative

General: Provided location maps; continued work on the Engineering Section's USGS quad maps; initiated updating the Engineering Section's filing (placing all information in the computer); provided assistance and support in the Parks renovation program; continued section's complete archival file scanning and production of digital format plan archives; did preliminary architectural program development for the Farley-Hill House adjacent to the Governor's Mansion in coordination with the State Building Commission and the Governor's Office.

Marine Police

Orange Beach and Baldwin County: Performed surveys.

Marine Resources

Claude Peteet Mariculture Center: Performed final inspection

Baldwin County: Performed surveys.

Mobile Yacht Club Boat Ramp: Performed survey.

Gulf/Mobile Bay: Performed surveys of hurricane damage.

Significant coordination of debris cleanup and emergency projects were required to be done at all coastal areas.

State Lands

Freedom Hills Management Area: Performed survey.

Mobile-Tensaw Forever Wild Tract: coordinated removal of encroaching structures along tract.

Bullock County: Completed design for satellite toilet facility at the Wehle Nature Center; performed architectural program development for new dormitory facilities

Forever Wild: Surveyed property in Jackson and Lauderdale counties.

Greene County (Eutaw Tract): Performed survey.

Ono Island: Performed survey.

General: Continued to work with consultant for master planning for Environmental Complex (Meaher North); performed property line surveys on school lands statewide. Located monuments on the Georgia, Florida, and Mississippi state lines; located mean high tide lines in Baldwin County; assisted in acreage determination and navigability research. Performed surveys of hurricane damage.

State Parks

Cathedral Caverns: Completed design work, project construction documents on new pedestrian facility for cave entrance. Completed construction phase for new shelters; coordinated with park crew for future construction.

Cheaha: Completed construction phase for water system improvements; completed year-end inspection for Bald Rock Lodge, cabins and observation tower.

DeSoto: Continued to produce boundary line survey for segment of park. Construction phase of rustic cabin renovations continued after significant redesign and re-scoping required because of extensive hidden damage to structures.

Chewacla: Continued work on construction documents for new office, entrance, new bathrooms and pavilions at upper and lower areas; continued coordination of phase two of renovation work; Performed surveys perk tests and topo for areas planned in phase two of work. Did preliminary design for park entrance sign at U.S. 29 and Shell Toomer Parkway.

Joe Wheeler: Administered work in continuing improvements; Performed Road Layout, Boundary Line and New Cabin surveys. Completed construction of docks and boating center improvements.

Lakepoint: Continued administration of work with consultants preparing design documents for renovation of lodge, cabins, marina, and site improvements. Construction of new cabin elements completed. Designed new Pergola and shade structure for beach area.

Meaher: Administered work with consultants preparing design documents for campground improvements; began construction on new bathhouse and pier area.

Paul Grist: Performed boundary surveys.

Oak Mountain: Continued administration of work with consultants preparing design documents for master plan and improvements; coordinated golf course renovation and completed work on pro shop renovation; designed elements of trailhead for Peavine Falls Trail; evaluated erosion and sediment control at Fishing Lake.

Lake Guntersville: Provided additional survey and topographic information for park improvement projects; performed property line surveys; continued to administer work with ongoing overall lodge and park improvements-construction phase; designed schematic layout for new maintenance building performed final inspection on completed work.

Gulf: Continued to administer/work with consultants preparing design documents for park improvements; participated in master planning and lodge/conference center improvements; worked with consultant and re-designed intake structure for saltwater feed line; continue to provide survey and topographic information for park improvement projects; performed property line surveys; began construction of dune enhancement habitat restoration, and facility improvements at Florida Point, Cotton Bayou, Romar Beach and County Road 2 sites; completed campground renovation and began construction of new beach pavilion (delayed because of Hurricane Katrina); did preliminary work on reforestation and landscaping at campground; worked with local authorities concerning trail improvements and links to city trails and park trail systems.

Lake Lurleen: Administered work with consultants preparing design documents for park improvements; performed property line surveys.

Wind Creek: Assisted with construction of new cabins.

Monte Sano: Performed preliminary designs and project scope for park improvement projects; Completed renovations to the existing tavern structure and campground improvements; performed property line surveys.

Rickwood Caverns: Performed survey.

General: Conducted research/plans for various other parks; performed preliminary investigations and project scope for various park improvement projects working with consultants; continued production/update of brochure maps for State Parks; produced and administered aerial mapping project of all state parks and continued to provide assistance in consultant selection for ongoing Parks Renovation Program; provided assistance for Parks master planning program.

Because of two catastrophic hurricane storm events within a year's time (Hurricanes Ivan and Katrina), ongoing projects and design phases of renovations and new work were greatly impacted. Over \$10 million of projects responding to this destruction were started, significant

coordination of debris cleanup and emergency projects were required to be done alongside ongoing construction efforts at this facility and all coastal areas. This required intensive participation by the Chief of Engineering Services and other Engineering staff.

Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries

Jackson County: Continued to performed property line surveys. State Lakes: Completed construction documents for new concession building at Lee County Lake.

Swan Creek: Completed construction documents and began work on New District I Office Complex; performed stakeout survey.

Hatcheries: Directed reconstruction of structures at Eastaboga Hatchery following tornado damage; completed additional renovations for residences at the Marion State Fish Hatchery and closed out project.

Marion Fish Hatchery: Performed survey.

Fisheries: New Stevenson boat ramp and parking lot contract administration; contract administration and review for Waterloo Boat Ramp in Lauderdale County.

Pelican Point: Performed survey.

Escambia County Boat Ramp: Performed survey.

Coon Creek Boat Ramp (Tallapoosa County): Performed survey.

Mount Vernon Boat Ramp: Performed survey.

Elmore County Boat Ramp at Lake Jordan: Plans review and coordination for road improvements. Cliff's Landing, Tensaw River near Bay Minette: completed rebuilding project.

Law Enforcement: Provided digital files for hunter education and location maps; provided digital state WMA map for the Department of Transportation; performed property line surveys for numerous properties under the control of this division.

Stockton Shooting Range: Performed survey.

Wildlife: Continued GIS discussion and application work; updated/produced all state WMA maps; produced state wide management area map inserts; aided in other various projects for this section including digitizing and acre age determination; continued surveyed property line at the James D. Martin/Skyline WMA; performed survey work.

Future Plans

The Engineering Section plans to continue assistance and coordination of Hurricane Ivan and Hurricane Katrina repairs, debris cleanup coordination with FEMA and insurance settlements, as well as to continue surveying property lines for State Parks, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and other critical locations involving the Department. The section also plans to provide master planning, programming, design and contract administration for future construction projects including the ongoing renovation program of the State Parks Division and other divisions, surveys of public access areas, maintenance of existing department facilities, and design and construction of new facilities when possible.

Marine Police



The Marine Police Division's mission is to enhance safety and promote responsible use of resources on Alabama's waterways through enforcement, education and community activities for approximately 1 million boaters on the state's 1.3 million acres of recreational waters. (This program is handled in the field by less than 60 Marine Police Officers using one-officer patrol craft who each cover over 23,000 surface acres.) Field enforcement officers are responsible for all patrol activities and public education within their assigned areas. Field enforcement and education are the responsibility of the Chief of Operations. An education officer, supply/inventory officer and field district supervisors comprise the Chief of Operations staff.

The administrative unit provides budgetary, fiscal, logistical and maintenance support. The boat registration unit assists the Marine Police Division in the registration and records retention of approximately 400,000 boats. The boat registration unit, along with other AMP administrative personnel also supports the boat theft unit, which consists of three Marine Police officers assigned statewide. Recovery of stolen property such as boats, motors and accessory equipment is a function of the boat theft unit.

In addition to routine safety patrol, functions of the Marine Police Division include registration of all pleasure boats, licensing of all boat operators, boat and marine accessory theft, a statewide Boating Education Program, and assisting other state, local and federal officers in enforcement activities relating to homeland security, maritime and waterway smuggling, drug interdiction, and other serious crimes committed in the marine environment. The Marine Police Division also administers the waterway hazard and control marking program, presently overseeing 1,518 hazard and control markers and zones.

Facilities and Personnel

The Marine Police Division maintains headquarters, a maintenance shop and warehouse in Montgomery. A facility at Orange Beach is used for training and in-service training. The state is divided into four districts for enforcement purposes. District headquarters are maintained at Lake Guntersville State Park, Alpine, Wind Creek State Park, and Alabama Point. These headquarters provide contact sites for the boating public, education program locations, and training facilities for district personnel. In FY 2004-2005, the Marine Police Division operated with 82 employees statewide. This included 65 uniformed officers, 10 clerical personnel, three marine mechanics, three laborers, and the Division Director. Five new Marine Police Officers were hired in August 2005.

Budget and Expenditures

For the fiscal year 2004-2005, the Marine Police Division was authorized a budget of \$7,112,122. Total expenditures amounted to \$6,755,901. These funds were generated from boat registration fees, enforcement fines, marine fuel tax, and the boating safety assistance program from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Coast Guard.

Significant Accomplishments

- More than 31,506 persons successfully completed the Basic Boating Course taught by Marine Police officers in 2005.
- Boat operator licenses were issued to 37,648 boat operators in 2005. A total of 569,096 operator licenses are currently on file.
- In addition to providing needed services in Alabama, 28 Marine Police Officers participated in the Hurricane Katrina relief efforts in Mississippi.
- In August 2005, Marine Police Officers provided enforcement and crowd control at the Alabama-based Offshore Super Powerboat Race. There were 2,000 spectators in boats and approximately 100,000 more onshore for this event.
- Alabama Power Company contributed a \$25,000 grant to be used to promote public safety on the 12 Alabama Power Company impoundments.
- Four new sergeant positions were established statewide.

Enforcement

In the year 2004-2005, Marine Police Officers were on patrol for 28,545 hours. There were 17,345 vessel contacts that resulted in 2,477 arrests and 2,850 written warnings. Fifty-six arrests were made for boating under the influence of alcohol. Fifty-eight hours were spent assisting with drug interdictions resulting in 61 arrests for illegal possession of drugs. Fifty-six boat operator licenses were suspended or revoked.

Marine Police officers performed 262 hours of search and rescue and assists to boaters. Marine Police officers were called upon by other law enforcement agencies for 346 hours of assistance with various duties. There were 53 marine events permitted by the Division, resulting in 201 hours of security patrol.

Marine Police officers are still under orders to patrol all critical infrastructure sites on the water that are considered potential terrorist targets. All officers have received

2004-2005 Marine Police Law Enforcement Statistics

- **Routine Patrol** 28,545 hours
- **Homeland Security Patrol**
..... 3,493 hours
- **Search and Rescue
and Assists to Boaters** 262 hours
- **Vessel Contacts** 17,345
- **Arrests** 2,477
56 for boating under the influence of alcohol
61 for illegal possession of drugs
- **Written Warnings** 2,850
- **Boat Operator Licenses
Suspended or Revoked** 56
- **Boating Accidents** 88
- **Fatalities** 14

training on the deployment of special teams in the event of terrorist threat. Approximately 3,493 hours were expended on Homeland Security patrols.

The Boat Theft Investigators opened 158 new cases of boat theft in 2005.

Officers investigated 88 boating accidents that resulted in 14 fatalities for the fiscal year.

The Disaster Response Team is comprised of 21 officers from all areas of the state. The DRT responds to emergencies such as floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes or by an activation call from Emergency Management Services. During hurricane season, the DRT members, as well as the officers located in the Alabama Point headquarters, performed search and rescue operations along the coastal areas (on land and water), formed patrols to prevent looting, manned road blocks and Emergency Operations Centers, and were called to Baldwin County, Mobile County and Mississippi to assist in enforcement and recovery operations.

Public Education

The Education Section of the Alabama Marine Police Division is continuing a joint cooperative venture with the State Department of Education, Driver Education Section, with the implementation of the boating education taught in the driver education classes. Compliance increased during the 2004-2005 school year. Work is continuing to

achieve the 100 percent participation, which was mandated by the Boating Safety Reform Act of 1994. Marine Police furnishes training to the driver education instructors and participates in a series of workshops at various sites throughout the state. Marine Police is also furnishing instructional materials such as manuals, pamphlets, videos and speakers to ensure a successful program.

The Marine Police Division and the Department of Public Safety, Driver's License Division, continue to work together to license the boaters of Alabama. The Marine Police Division provides the training for the driver license examiners and study guides for applicants to study for the written exam, which is conducted by the Department of Public Safety. Statewide issuance of the boat operator's license continues to increase with 37,648 licenses issued for this reporting period. A concentrated radio, TV, and media blitz has continued to encourage the boating community to come in compliance with the vessel license requirement.

Marine Police personnel taught 57 boating courses during the year 2005. Officers conducted 596 public education programs and presentations with 51,219 persons in attendance. Marine Police patrol equipment and static displays were manned at public schools, boat shows, safety fairs, and other functions throughout the state.

Radio and television appearances by Marine Police officers amounted to 134; in addition, 460 newspaper articles and magazine articles were published statewide. Time expended on educational functions by the officers totaled 5,171 hours; 90,000 units of boating literature were distributed to the public; 576 hours were dedicated to placing, replacing, and repairing 285 aids to navigation on Alabama's waterways. The state-approved online boating course, www.boat-ed.com, which was implemented as another alternative for the vessel license requirement, continues to receive a healthy response with 6,863 certifications generated. Additional printed materials and videos were acquired for use in providing public education for the marine community.

Marine Police Officers continue to work closely with ADEM in the implementation of the Marine Sewage Act of October 2003. The officers have been enforcing the Marine Sanitation Act as it pertains to the regulating of boat sewage discharge. This includes prohibiting the docking, storing, anchoring or mooring of vessels with a Type III marine sanitation device at marinas without a pump-out or waste disposal system (except in emergency situations). Although officers have found enforcement problems within the Act, 198 Marine Sanitation Device inspections were conducted on both recreational and residential vessels and yearly inspection decals were issued.

A multi-agency program, The Clean Waters Initiative, was formed to address not only the Marine Sewage Act, but also the public's concerns for clean water. This initiative will help the public understand how legislation like the Sewage Act affects them and the environment. A mailout directed at the marina owners and those registered boat

owners most likely to have a sanitation device was completed in an effort to raise awareness of the program and to help with compliance of the Act. Additional awareness efforts directed at the public were done throughout the year at different venues.

Marine Police Officers have also been working closely with the State Lands Coastal Section in the development and implementation of the Clean Marina Act.

Boat Registration

The Boat Registration Section is responsible for registration and records retention of approximately 400,000 boats. The total number of boats registered in FY 2004-2005 was 266,047. In addition, 26,979 ownership transfers were processed. Alabama ranks 17th in the nation for total number of vessels registered. The boat registration unit also assists the boat theft unit, which consists of three Marine Police officers assigned statewide.

Significant Problems/Solutions

The most significant problems facing the Marine Police Division are a critical shortage of enforcement personnel and upcoming funding shortfalls. In order to address both these problems, a source of funding must be found.

Thirty additional officers will be needed over the next four years to bring the Division to an effective level. The cost to accomplish this is estimated at \$1.5 million. With a turnover of nearly 18 percent of experienced personnel

(by FY 07) and the additional responsibility of providing security and surveillance for critical infrastructure sites on the water in partnership with the Homeland Security Department, at least a 50 percent increase in personnel is necessary. At the present time, no additional funding has been provided through Homeland Security.

As demands for additional officer presence on the water increase, funding issues will have to be looked at and appropriate revenue, through a boat registration increase, generated to maintain the Division's operations.

As enforcement of the Marine Sanitation Act continues, problems within the legislation have surfaced, resulting in a need for an amendment of this Act in order to provide clear enforcement authority.

Future Plans

The Division goals and objectives for fiscal year 2005-2006 are as follows:

- Determine level of revenue needed to maintain and support division operations, then work towards securing legislation for increase.
- Reduce the number of boating accidents resulting in fatalities and injuries.
- License 20,000 boat operators.
- Working with Accounting and Information Technology sections, update antiquated boat registration system and implement and refine new on-line renewal and registration system.
- Work towards amending the Marine Sanitation Act.



Marine Resources

The Marine Resources Division (MRD) is responsible for the management of Alabama's marine fisheries resources through research and enforcement programs. Two division facilities supported an average of 55 employees of the Administrative, Enforcement, and Fisheries Sections during fiscal year 2005.

Budget and Expenditures

A total expenditure of \$5,515,636 was made from the approved budget of \$5,732,885. Revenue of \$5,797,069 was made up from federal aid (60 percent), license fees (27 percent), marine gas tax (11 percent), and other sources (2 percent). This plus a cash forward balance of \$3,187,077 provided funding of \$8,984,146 for the fiscal year.

The Administrative Section expended \$1,436,129 of salaries and operational expenses for division activities.

Expenditures for the Enforcement Section totaled \$1,685,793 of which \$24,345 was reimbursable by a grant from the National Marine Fisheries Service and \$650,000 was reimbursable under a Joint Enforcement Agreement from NOAA/Office of Law Enforcement.

Fisheries Section expenditures were \$2,393,714 which consisted of funds from 17 federal aid programs and required state matching funds. Federal aid projects varied in state match requirements from zero to 25 percent. Included in these expenditures, in addition to the normal expenditure were shell planting activities, and boating access area upkeep, renovation, and construction.

Significant Problems and Solutions

Hurricanes Ivan (September 2004) and Katrina (September 2005) caused serious disruptions of services and unavoidable changes to Division plans throughout FY 2005. Boating access facilities and inshore reefs have suffered greatly from both storms, and the saltwater pipeline for hatchery work has yet to be repaired from Ivan. FEMA and support sections of DCNR have been very helpful during this difficult time, and continue to be so. It will still take some time yet to repair damages from the storms; these repairs continue to decrease available state funds (FEMA match) which had been planned for other productive uses and services.

The lack of adequate quantities of high salinity, high quality water for rearing of marine fishes such as red snapper at the CPMC continues. Hurricane Ivan destroyed the intake structure, the pump station, and portions of the pipeline that supplied water to CPMC. This will be repaired with FEMA and insurance monies after the Gulf State Park pier is rebuilt and relocated to serve for attachment of the intake structure. It is estimated that it will take two to four

years to rebuild.

There is a need for authority to allow offenses committed in the Gulf of Mexico outside of the state's territorial waters to be heard in state district court. This could be accomplished by amending regulation 9-12-4.

There currently is no way to track the recreational effort expended against the marine resources with the use of gig, castnet, recreational crab traps or spearfishing. These fishing gears need to be added to the recreational fishing license at no additional fee by amending 9-11-53.1 and 9-12-55.2.

At present commercial fishermen can not legally sell fish caught in cast nets or with gigs because of a lack of a commercial license for this activity. A commercial license should be established for these activities.

The issue of permitting of liquid natural gas (LNG) facilities offshore from Alabama remains an issue particularly regarding the use of "open loop" systems to warm the liquid for transport to market.

ADMINISTRATION SECTION

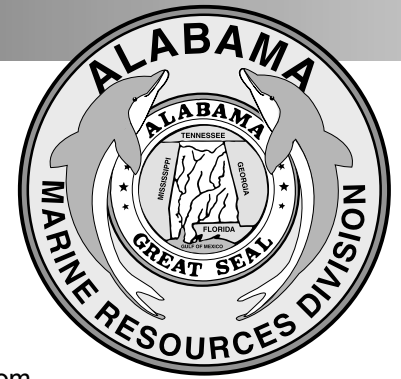
The Administrative Section provides supervision, clerical, purchasing, and general administrative support for the two operational sections; supervises state seismic activities; and coordinates with other state, federal and regional agencies on fisheries and environmental matters.

Staff for the Administrative Section consisted of the division director, seven clerical, one accountant, one custodial worker, and one marine mechanic employee. Offices are maintained at Dauphin Island, and Gulf Shores.

Accomplishments

Construction was completed of a pumping system and pipeline that extends from the Gulf of Mexico at the Gulf State Park Pier to CPMC. This project was funded by CIAP funds. It enhanced the development of red snapper production at CPMC by providing a supply of high salinity water. However, Hurricane Ivan destroyed the intake structure, the pump station, and portions of the pipeline. This will be repaired with FEMA monies after the Gulf State Park pier is relocated to serve for attachment of the intake structure. It is estimated that it will take two years to repair the structure.

Enforcement officers continued to improve and expand the Coastwatch Program, training citizens to recognize



and report violations of saltwater fishing laws and regulations. Information from Coastwatch members has assisted with the planning of enforcement patrols and deployment of manpower and other resources resulting in saved man-hours by not responding to inaccurate reports of violations. To date, 203 citizens have been trained at 31 training sessions held in Mobile, Baldwin, and Jefferson counties. The response to the program continues to be very positive.



The U.S. Department of Commerce appropriations budget for the 2005 fiscal year contained \$17 million earmarked for cooperative enforcement initiatives between NOAA law enforcement and state fisheries law enforcement entities. The Marine Resources Division and NOAA Enforcement entered into a joint enforcement agreement pursuant to the initiative. As part of the agreement, federal dollars are dedicated to increase fisheries law enforcement efforts and compliance with federal fishery regulations along coastal Alabama and the Gulf of Mexico.

Fisheries resources are cooperatively protected, managed, and conserved by state and federal governments. The MRD enforcement section received \$650,000 as part of the agreement. The money was used to purchase one offshore vessel, and surveillance equipment that will be strategically located in coastal Alabama. Additionally, it provided funding to increase patrol hours for MRD officers.

The 2005 edition of the popular Alabama Marine Information Calendar was produced and distributed. In addition, a calendar depicting conservation related artwork by coastal fourth and fifth graders was produced and printed. The artwork for the calendar was selected through an art contest, hosted by the division and judged by local specialists in coastal conservation and the arts. The winning selections were also displayed in art museums in both Mobile and Baldwin counties. Receptions were held at each museum for the winning students, their friends, and families.

The success of the electronic trip ticket computer program continues to grow. Currently 23 Alabama seafood

2004-2005

Marine Resources

Law Enforcement Statistics

Patrol..... 11,018 Hours

Boat Checks6,272

Seafood Shop Inspections1,211

Recreational Fisherman Checks10,663

Citations and Warnings.....1,502

dealers are online with this program. These dealers contribute substantial amounts of landings data to MRD. The computer program allows seafood dealers to enter landings and trip information from commercial fishermen and submit it electronically on a monthly basis.

During 2005, AMRD staff participated in four large events in Mobile and Baldwin counties in an effort to inform and educate the public about Alabama's marine environment. Saltwater "touch tables" were set up at each event to allow children, both young and old, the opportunity to interact with and learn about marine animals commonly found in Alabama's waters. Literature concerning rules and regulations, calendars, posters, and other important issues was distributed. Children enjoyed the opportunity to color and complete activity books found our children's art section. The events included the Mobile Boat Show, the Florida Sportsman Fishing show, the National Shrimp Festival in Gulf Shores, and the Conservation Bird Festival.

Future Plans

Plans are in place to continue work at the Pier Street ramp in Fairhope during the next fiscal year with the addition of a breakwater.

The Division plans to continue development of the inshore artificial reef system particularly in Baldwin County.

Renovation of the Boggy Point Boat Ramp will be completed in 2006. Repairs have been made to ramps damaged by Hurricane Ivan and repairs will be completed to those damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

Attempts will be made to extend the jurisdiction of District Courts to offenses committed offshore from Alabama in addition to those committed fully within Alabama's territorial sea.

ENFORCEMENT SECTION

The Enforcement Section patrols Alabama's coastal waters, enforcing state and federal laws and regulations relating to the conservation and protection of marine

resources. Officers also enforce laws and regulations relating to boating safety and freshwater fishing and hunting, conduct search and rescue missions, and participate in drug interdiction operations. Officers are cross-trained and deputized as National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and U.S. Customs agents and cooperate extensively with these agencies and other Federal agencies in the coordination of joint enforcement operations, investigative and fisheries enforcement expertise, training, public safety, and other natural resource issues.

Facilities for the Enforcement Section consist of headquarters at Dauphin Island and a district office in Gulf Shores. There are 17 enforcement officers in the section, 10 stationed in Mobile County, six stationed in Baldwin County, and the Chief Enforcement Officer stationed at Dauphin Island headquarters.

Accomplishments

Enforcement officers conducted 11,018.5 hours of boat and shore patrol, 6,272 boat checks, 1,211 seafood shop inspections, 10,663 recreational fisherman checks, and issued 1,502 citations and warnings for illegal activities. Twenty-four percent of the citations and warnings (359) were for violations of recreational fishing laws and regulations. The 379 violations of commercial fishing laws and regulations comprised 25 percent of the citations and warnings issued. Officers also issued citations and warnings for 455 violations of boating safety laws and regulations, 89 wildlife and freshwater fisheries, and 220 citations for other state and federal laws and regulations. A total of 15,672.5 hours was spent on administrative duties, court attendance, training, and equipment maintenance. Officers worked 2,998 hours with the National Marine Fisheries Services interjurisdictional fisheries enforcement program.

Enforcement officers continued to improve and expand the Coastwatch Program, training citizens to recognize and report violations of saltwater fishing laws and regulations. Information from Coastwatch members has assisted with planning of enforcement patrols and deployment of manpower and other resources resulting in saved man-hours by not responding to inaccurate reports of violations. To date, 203 citizens have been trained at 31 training sessions held in Mobile, Baldwin, and Jefferson counties. The response to the program continues to be very positive.

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Enforcement officers assisted with the relief efforts after hurricane Katrina severely damaged the Alabama Coastal areas. Marine Resources Enforcement officers rescued 32 people in Bayou La Batre during the height of the storm. Marine Resources Enforcement officers assisted police departments in Mobile County by providing additional security to prevent looting, assisted with the distribution of food, water, and other supplies, provided manpower for check points, provided marine security and transport, and provided enforcement manpower to assist with additional enforcement requirements.

Officers attended training courses on boat handling, criminal investigation, self-defense, supervision, and other state and federal agency law enforcement programs.

Officers continued to enhance public outreach efforts to better communicate enforcement efforts to provide important information and to foster cooperative management initiatives.

Future Plans

- Continue to develop mechanisms to improve the Coastwatch program and public outreach efforts to better communicate enforcement efforts and important information.
- Continue to develop procedures to enhance the Joint Enforcement Agreement with NOAA, assure that such agreements are implemented in future years, and seek long-term funding for agreements.
- Work with other Gulf states and the National Marine Fisheries Service to implement the Gulfwide strategic fisheries enforcement plan.
- Continue to develop procedures and provide officers with training to enhance Homeland Defense activities.
- Continue to foster efforts to allow the prosecution of violations in federal waters in the District Court System in Alabama.

FISHERIES SECTION

The activities of the Fisheries Section are directed toward management of commercial and recreational fisheries in Alabama's marine and estuarine waters. These activities involve cooperative efforts with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in nearshore Federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico and with other Gulf of Mexico state agencies to develop cooperative fisheries management programs. These activities are mostly funded through federal aid programs of the U.S. Departments of Commerce (NOAA/NMFS) and Interior (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). Biological programs not covered by federal aid such as fish kill evaluation, oyster management, shrimp management efforts, and pollution investigations are supported by commercial and recreational license fees. The Section personnel also assist in oversight of natural gas activities within Alabama's coastal waters, territorial sea, and adjacent federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico and comment on applications for U.S. Army Corps of Engineer permits in the coastal area.

Fisheries facilities consist of the CPMC in Gulf Shores and the MRD Laboratory on Dauphin Island. Personnel consist of one Biologist V, one Biologist IV, one Biologist III, four Biologist IIs, one Biologist I, five Biologist Aide IIIs, 13 Biologist Aide I/IIIs, and two temporary laborers.

Accomplishments

The facilities for red snapper brood fish maturation studies recently completed at the CPMC have resulted in the increased production of red snapper fingerlings. The production of these fingerlings by naturally spawning fish has enabled continued cooperative research to occur between the MRD, Auburn University, and Alma Bryant High School. A pumping system and pipeline that extends from the Gulf of Mexico at the Gulf State Park Pier to the CPMC was funded by CIAP funds. It enhanced the development of red snapper production at CPMC by providing a supply of high salinity water. However, Hurricane Ivan destroyed the intake structure, the pump station, and portions of the pipeline. This will be repaired with FEMA monies after the Gulf State Park pier is relocated to serve for attachment of the intake structure.

The fifth year of a cooperative project with Auburn University has resulted in refined techniques for raising shrimp in ponds. These will be used to enhance the production of shrimp in the shrimp farms of north central Alabama.

The Alabama Marine Resources Division entered a joint venture with Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (NEP) to launch a new volunteer monitoring program, CrabWatch. CrabWatch is an effort to collect capture data from the recreational crab fishery and incidentally monitor for invasive species. Currently, 37 volunteers are participating in this program collecting length, sex and mortality data for individual crabs. Identification and enumeration of

bycatch is also compiled; data on invasive aquatic nuisance species is verified by AMRD staff. All volunteer data is submitted to NEP for synthesis. AMRD provides technical support for species identification and reviews data for trends.

Biologists from the Division participated in the Alabama Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force created in conjunction with the Department of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries and authorized by the Governor's Executive Order. This group encompasses all state agencies with interest in or regulation of aquatic nuisance species. The goal of this task force is to produce an Aquatic Nuisance Species Response Plan by the end of 2006.

The fifth year of a cooperative project with Auburn University has resulted in refined techniques for raising shrimp in ponds. These will be used to enhance the production of shrimp in the shrimp farms in west central Alabama.

One hundred twenty-five new concrete and steel pyramid reefs were deployed in a grid fashion offshore in Alabama's reef areas. This brings the total deployment of these specially fabricated modules to 347. These reef modules are about 10 feet tall, weigh about 5,000 pounds each, and are covered on each side with perforated plate steel up to one inch thick. The modules were distributed from east to west and shallow to deep to spread out the fishing effort over the widest possible area. Material shortages due to the storms protracted the contract effort; another 125 modules will be deployed in early 2006.

The initial effort to create new inshore fishery habitat in south Baldwin County was undertaken. Hurricane Ivan destroyed the Gulf State Park Lodge, and made plenty of material available for reefing. The pool deck and seawall were in the way of the beach renourishment project, and so was removed and used to start Bayou St. John Reef in Orange Beach. The clean concrete slabs were placed in the southwestern third of the nearly 6-acre reef. The reef will be completed as the rest of the lodge comes down.

During the year 841 fisheries assessment samples were taken. This data is part of a long-term data base that lets managers review the populations of lower trophic level species to detect any changes before they reach the recreational and commercial important species. A total of 91 habitat assessments were performed, and 4,197 fishermen were interviewed during creel surveys.

The success of the electronic trip ticket computer program continues to grow. Currently 23 Alabama seafood dealers are online with this program. These dealers contribute substantial amounts of landings data to MRD. The computer program allows seafood dealers to enter landings and trip information from commercial fishermen and submit it electronically on a monthly basis.

During the past fiscal year, MRD processed submitted trip ticket data from 23,500 commercial trips reporting over 19.6 million pounds of seafood worth over \$33 million.

Hurricane Katrina delivered a devastating blow to Alabama's seafood industry. Storm surges of up to 18 feet flooded businesses and homes, some of which were

totally destroyed. Flood waters damaged and destroyed equipment, contaminated seafood products, and stranded an initial estimate of over 50 commercial vessels on shore. The production of processed seafood in Alabama has decreased for most fisheries. Approximately 70-80 percent of Alabama's total yearly processed seafood is supplied to Alabama from outside sources; in some fisheries such as oysters, the dependency is higher. Although abundant volumes of shrimp have been unloaded following Katrina, prices have stagnated reportedly due to labor shortages. AMRD biologists are working with economists from the University of South Alabama and NOAA fisheries to assess losses for the seafood and charter industries in Alabama. Preliminary figures estimate losses to exceed \$87 million. Following Hurricane Katrina, AMRD biologists worked with economists with NOAA Fisheries and the University of South Alabama to estimate losses to the seafood industry. The finished report is anticipated to be used to acquire financial aid for Alabama's struggling seafood industry.



MRD hosted two youth fishing days at Claude Peteet Mariculture Center in 2005. Forty children from Baldwin county were given the opportunity to fish in one of CPMC's ponds stocked with red drum 12-16 inches. Nearly all of the children caught a fish and for some it was their first time in their life they had caught a fish. In addition to fishing the children were given a tour of the hatchery operations at CPMC which included red snapper brood stock and juveniles, injection and algae rooms.

Portersville Bay oyster reefs were opened to dredging beginning on April 26, 2005 and remained open for a short period. They were reopened on May 2, 2005 and remained so through December. Eventually 32 oystermen were permitted to harvest with the use of dredges. The activity was closely monitored and the type dredges allowed were restricted to a certain type. The activity was successful and catch per unit effort was as high as 7.5 sacks per hour. This dropped off somewhat by the end of December as the harvest proceeded but was still good.

Federal Aid

Wallop/Breaux: Wallop/Breaux funds are administered through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Funds used

from this source by the MRD were directed toward a creel survey of Alabama's saltwater recreational anglers, production of the 2005 edition of the popular Alabama Marine Information Calendar, production of the new children's coastal conservation art calendar, construction of artificial fishing reefs in the Gulf of Mexico off Alabama, maintaining equipment and facilities in Gulf Shores and Dauphin Island, managing the public artificial fishing reef permit system in the Gulf of Mexico off Alabama, assisting individuals in designing artificial reefs, conducting mariculture research on red snapper, maintaining and enhancing boat ramps for boating access, conducting a study of the attraction of juvenile red snapper to small patch reefs, sampling coastal Alabama fishes to determine stock status, and testing various offshore artificial reef modules with respect to attractant qualities and durability. An additional project to coordinate all federal aid programs within the MRD and coordinate with other Gulf states was also funded from this source.

Personnel also revised the Alabama Marine Resources Activity Book, which provides an interactive format for educating elementary students about the life cycles and habits of local organisms.

Adult Finfish Sampling Program: Alabama's MRD continues a fishery independent gillnet sampling program. The objective is to gather data on adult fish to be used in the management of important species. Sampling is being conducted through the use of two gillnet configurations and a stratified random design. Two hundred net sets were conducted out of a target of 240, due to hurricanes this season. In 2005, 4678 finfish representing six freshwater and 37 marine species were collected.

Cooperative Statistics: Federal aid funds for this program are administered by the Department of Commerce (NOAA Fisheries) and are utilized by the MRD to collect fisheries-dependent data on commercial shrimp, oyster, crab and finfish landings. Additionally, information on processed seafood such as crab meat and mullet is compiled. Biological information was collected on striped mullet, flounder, Spanish mackerel, grouper, and red snapper. Commercial seafood license data was forwarded to NOAA Fisheries under this grant.

Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP): Funds from this program are administered by the Department of Commerce (NOAA/NMFS) and are utilized in Alabama for the development of a long term fishery-independent data base on recreationally and commercially important marine and estuarine fishery stocks. This project provides funds to assist in management of the Alabama shrimp fishery and evaluate spawning success and juvenile survival for important recreational and commercial species.

Inshore Roving Creel Survey: The survey uses non-uniform probability roving creel sampling based on aerial overflight counts to sample the marine recreational fishery in coastal Alabama. Goals of the survey include characterization of Alabama's coastal recreational boat fishers and

their catch. Biological information from fishermen's catch are helpful for determining health of fish stocks.

The Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS): Funding for this project is provided through a subgrant from the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. The National Marine Fisheries Service utilizes this survey to gather catch and effort information on a trip level for shore, charter and private boat anglers throughout the United States. Data generated from the survey is used by fisheries managers throughout its scope of coverage. MRD has a subcontract to conduct the portion of MRFSS which collects data from anglers after they have completed their fishing trips and interviews charter boat captains for effort. Division personnel completed 2,371 fishermen interviews for FY 2005. Through August 2005, the most recent data available, over 6,308 fish were identified representing 69 species, and of these, 4,308 (68 percent) fish were measured. Hurricane Ivan damaged the local infrastructure and this contributed to reduced interviews in the fall of 2004 causing some quotas to be missed.

Otolith Sampling Program: Funding for this project is provided through a subgrant from the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. AMRD continued collection of otoliths (ear stones) primarily from red snapper, greater amberjack, king mackerel, and southern and gulf flounder caught by commercial and recreational fishermen. Otoliths are used to age fish, important information used to determine the health of fish stocks. A total of 1,853 otoliths were collected in fiscal year 2005.

Commercial Trip Ticket Program: Funding for this program is provided through the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC). This program is part of a Gulf-wide effort to generate more specific information for each commercial fishery by collecting landings and effort data from each fishing trip. Trip tickets are printed in triplicate form and supplied to Alabama seafood dealers. Seafood dealers are required to complete the trip ticket for each transaction. An alternative form of submission is through an electronic entry program which allows seafood dealers to enter landings and trip information and submit



it via the internet on a monthly basis. Data from the completed trip tickets are scanned into a computer, verified and edited. Monthly data is sent to the GSMFC and will ultimately be supplied to NOAA Fisheries.

Hurricane Ivan Relief Funds: Funds obtained by the Marine Resources Division in the aftermath of the damage caused by Hurricane Ivan were used to plant over 28,000 cubic yards of oyster cultch in the summer and fall of 2005. A total of 10,000 yards was planted in shallow area at the mouth of and in Heron bay. A total of 18,375 cubic yards of cultch was planted along the western edge of Cedar Point reef. Assessment of the reefs in the wake of Hurricane Katrina showed little damage to the reef areas over and above that caused by Ivan in 2004.

At-Sea Head Boat Pilot Survey: Funding for this project is provided through a subgrant from the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. This pilot program was initiated to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of this program compared to an existing logbook program which had mandatory reporting requirements from the head boat operators. The pilot program was conducted to see if the estimates of catch and harvest were comparable to those estimates from the logbook survey while reducing the reporting burden for the captains.

Non-Federal Aid

Biological and enforcement personnel worked together to collect data at oyster checkpoints, enabling the development of sound management measures for sustaining the oyster resources. Data collected assisted in increasing the accuracy of assessment of the status of Alabama oyster stocks.

The MRD also continued the cooperative endeavor with Auburn University and the new Alma May Bryant High School in Mobile County to provide a mariculture training center at the high school. This continues to be a very successful program which expands students' ability to participate in future fisheries.

Personnel maintained and improved the Web page for the Division, which is associated with and accessed through the Departmental home page at www.outdooralabama.com. The feedback to this site has been extremely positive and it has proven to be a tremendous asset in getting information and assistance to the public.

Future Plans

- Continue to collect appropriate data and work with recreational and commercial fishermen and other resource user groups to provide Division administrators with recommendations for strategies and regulations for management.
- Continue Development of mariculture procedures for commercially and recreationally important marine organisms. Cooperative projects will continue to be

initiated with Auburn University, the Dauphin Island Sealab, and the University of South Alabama. This will be enhanced by the rebuilding of the saltwater supply pipeline from the Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores to CPMC.

- Cooperative projects will continue to be initiated with Auburn University, the Dauphin Island Sealab, and the University of South Alabama to investigate artificial reef benefits and red snapper production enhancement. The Division will continue to construct inshore and offshore artificial reefs as materials and funding allow.
- Inshore assessment and monitoring work continued monthly to provide a more comprehensive depiction of Alabama's marine waters and resources.
- Continuation of the MRFSS in Alabama to include creels of anglers on charter boats, private boats, and shoreline and to continue the telephone survey to better define effort within the charter fishery.
- Continue collecting Alabama commercial seafood landings data via Alabama's Trip Ticket Program and to continue the collection of commercial biological fishery dependent data.
- Continuation of cooperative offshore reef creation effort with the Red Snapper World Championship organization.
- Renovation of Boggy Point Boat Ramp to include a new boat launching ramp and additional parking spaces for vehicle and trailers.

State Lands

The State Lands Division (SLD) manages undeveloped, state-owned trust lands that are specific as to their identity as well as to the income beneficiary. The lands are currently identified as Sixteenth Section and Indemnity School Lands of approximately 30,000 acres; approximately 7,000 acres of Mental Health/Mental Retardation Department trust lands; Muscle Shoals Grant Lands of approximately 8,000 acres; and other lands, including submerged lands (inland and coastal) of approximately 600,000 acres. In addition, the SLD manages certain resources on University of Montevallo, Auburn University and Department of Transportation lands. Resource uses include oil and gas exploration and development, timber harvesting, farming, coal mining, hunting leases and commercial uses.

The SLD maintains the State Land Resource Information Center, which is the database of all lands owned by the State of Alabama and its departments, agencies and institutions. These records reflect lands acquired, owned, managed or disposed of by all state agencies and institutions. Records are submitted by each agency, checked against individual county tax assessment records and entered into the division's Geographic Information System database.

The Forever Wild Public Land Acquisition Program is managed by the SLD at the direction of the program's Board of Trustees. Division personnel provide administrative support including coordination of the assessment and appraisal process, purchase negotiations, land purchase transactions, budget preparation and annual reporting to the governor and legislature.

The SLD conducts sales of excess state lands pursuant to the State Land Sales and Leasing Act. This law establishes a procedure aimed at assuring that the state receives full fair market value for lands that it sells or leases and that the procedure is open, competitive and subject to public scrutiny.

Alabama's official natural heritage database is maintained by the SLD. Animal and plant species and areas of biological significance that make up the rich natural diversity of our state are identified and inventoried. This effort provides important biological information to conservation organizations, developers, governmental agencies and the public in general. It also complements the goals of Forever Wild.

The SLD fosters conservation education and research through programs offered at the Wehle Nature Centers in Bullock County and Baldwin County, the Weeks Bay Reserve in Baldwin County and the Foster Wetland Conservation Tract in Mobile County.

The SLD conducts coastal resource management and planning through the Alabama Coastal Area Management Program (ACAMP). The ACAMP purpose is to promote, improve and safeguard the lands and waters located in Alabama's coastal area through a comprehensive and cooperative program designed to preserve, enhance and develop such valuable resources for the well-being of present and future generations. This program works in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, and is federally funded by the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the Department of Commerce. This function complements the Division's responsibilities for management of submerged lands.

The SLD implements the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) for the State of Alabama. The CIAP is a federally funded program under NOAA designed to mitigate for impacts from Outer Continental Shelf activities. Specifically, the State of Alabama CIAP is comprised of 35 projects, approved by the governor and the Secretary of Commerce, aimed at conserving and enhancing natural resources in the two coastal counties--Baldwin and Mobile. The SLD administers all contracts associated with CIAP and coordinates closely with NOAA to ensure program compliance.

The SLD manages these responsibilities through three sections: Administrative, Natural Heritage and Coastal. Specific accomplishments by each section for this past year follow.

Administrative Section Accomplishments

- Processed nominations for sales and leases of state-owned land pursuant to the provisions of the State Land Sales and Leasing Act. Included in this activity was trust land leased for purposes of hunting.



- Processed requests for oil, gas and mineral leases on state-owned lands including submerged water bottoms.
- Supported statewide educational activities through sales of timber on school trust lands managed by the Division.
- Implemented, permitted and monitored an ongoing beach nourishment project for the Gulf State Park in conjunction with the municipalities of Gulf Shores and Orange Beach.
- Administered the Forever Wild Land Trust program and facilitated the acquisition of the following six tracts of land around the State totaling 4,365 acres:
 - o Turkey Creek Tract (Jefferson County) – 462 acres
 - o Freedom Hills WMA-Walker Tract Additions (Colbert County) – 1,520 acres
 - o Mobile-Tensaw Delta-Bayou Jessamine Tract (Baldwin County) – 184 acres
 - o Freedom Hills WMA-BCM02 Tract Addition (Colbert County) – 714 acres
 - o Freedom Hills WMA-JCM Tract Additions (Colbert County) – 1,437 acres
 - o Turkey Creek Tract Addition (Jefferson County) – 48 acres
- Dedicated and opened the Walls of Jericho Forever Wild Tract in Jackson County and opened the Shoal Creek Preserve Forever Wild Tract in Lauderdale County for public use.
- The Bartram Canoe Trail was recognized by the American Canoe Association as an ACA recommended water trail.
- Continued implementation of the State of Alabama Coastal Impact Assistance Program. Accomplishments for this year include:
 - o Through a planning process, identified additional trail routes and overnight covered camping platforms locations for the Bartram Canoe Trail in the Mobile Tensaw Delta.
 - o Implemented resource enhancement projects including invasive, exotic removal activities at the Grand Bay Savanna Tract in Mobile County.
 - o Continued funding of a project to inventory exotic plant and animal communities in coastal Alabama.
- Coordinated Departmental activities relating to the Natural Resource Damage Assessment program including site inspections and participation in Natural Resource Trustee Council meetings.
- Initiated planning activities related to the Second Annual Alabama Outdoor Heritage Day.
- Conducted the Eighth Annual Bird Awareness Day at the Wehle Land Conservation Center in Midway.
- Initiated construction of four restroom facilities at the Wehle Land Conservation Center in Midway.
- Constructed horseback riding trails and mountain bike trails at the Wehle Land Conservation Center in Midway.
- Provided 40 public education and/or recreation opportunities at the Wehle Nature Center and the Wehle Land Conservation Center in Midway.
- Initiated sponsorship and planning activities for the Second Annual Coastal Birdfest.

State Lands Division

Sources of Receipts	Total Income
Commercial Leases	\$428,833
Oil and Gas Leases (Royalties)	\$259,244,822
8(g) Payments (Federal offshore shares)	\$14,619,811
Timber Sales	\$2,435,973
Coal Leases	\$1,162,249
Coal Gas	\$412,824
Misc., Easements, Fees and Permits	\$2,301,656
TOTAL	\$280,606,168

Distribution of State Lands Division Receipts

Alabama Trust Fund	\$270,060,963
Department of Education	\$22,930
School Trust Lands	\$2,720,331
Auburn University	\$7,636
Mental Health/Mental Retardation Department	\$55,560

Department of Conservation

State Lands Division	\$6,473,427
State Parks Division	\$629,665
Marine Resources	\$1,230

Other State Agencies

Forestry Commission	\$11,453
Department of Transportation	\$371,695
Historical Commission	\$250,591
Forever Wild	\$687

TOTAL	\$280,606,168
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- Responded to numerous requests from agencies and the public regarding information contained in the Land Resource Information Center (LRIC) database. Staff also worked with a number of state agencies to update information regarding state land ownership.
- Field staff continued routine land management activities including boundary marking, timber cruising, prescribed burning and law enforcement.

Natural Heritage Section Accomplishments

- Designs are underway to begin maintaining the Natural Heritage Section (NHS) Database in a sequel server format that will increase accessibility.
- Staff biologists continued collecting detailed GPS/GIS data of the Forever Wild tracts to aid with the management and research of these tracts. Management action implementation included prescribed burns, sensitive species re-introduction, and hydrology restoration.
- Monitoring of trail planning to maximize public opportunity to appreciate Alabama's rich biodiversity while protecting unique natural resources on the Walls of Jericho Forever Wild Tract. These trails are available for public use.
- Finished field work for one ACAMP \$110,000 grant and continues work on two other \$50,000 ACAMP grants by working to restore wetlands in Baldwin county and develop a baseline of the biodiversity of Lillian Swamp.



- Conducted extensive field surveys in cooperation with two Alabama universities in the Cumberland Plateau as a part of a \$250,000 federal research grant from the State Wildlife Grant Program through the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries.
- Assisted in the preparation of two Forest Legacy Program grant applications funding for two areas within the state, including the Mobile-Tensaw Delta (Honeycutt Creek Bluff) and the Cumberland Plateau (Prince Tract).
- Assisted in the preparation of two Coastal Estuarine Land Conservation Program grant applications funding for two areas within the state, including the 4,000 acres in the Red Hills region and 20,000 acres of coastal blackwater stream habitat.
- Continued implementation of task items associated with the state's Coastal Impact and Assistance Program.
- Continued reviewing new Forever Wild land nominations for biological diversity, ascertaining the status of all tract nomination's availability, and providing this information for Forever Wild meetings during the past year.
- Supplied information from the NHS database, along with numerous maps and other GIS products, in an effort to improve thorough review of development projects within the state.
- Continued active partnership with federal agencies including conducting Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes.

Coastal Section Accomplishments

Fairhope Office

- The Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program received a \$1.5 million grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to operate and to fund projects in FY2006. Of this amount, approximately \$675,000 in federal funds were distributed to other state agencies and approximately \$425,000 in federal funds were distributed to local governments, universities, the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program and other public entities to conduct activities that directly affect the quality of life along the Alabama coast.
- Coordinated and implemented the 18th Annual Alabama Coastal Cleanup, scheduled for September 16, 2005. Unfortunately, due to the extensive damage along the Alabama coast due to Hurricane Katrina, only eight of the original 22 cleanup zones were able to participate. Even at such a reduced capacity, 516 volunteers removed 14,245 pounds of debris from 88 miles of coastline.

- Sponsored and assisted coordination and facilitation of the Second Annual Alabama Coastal BirdFest.
- Alabama coastal staff worked extensively with the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, the Gulf of Mexico Program and representatives from Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida, and served as lead contact on the creation of a white paper outlining "Environmental Education in the Five Gulf States." Following this white paper, an action plan was developed. These papers are available for review at www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org.
- Participated in the Perdido Pass Navigation Project Recovery. This involved working with the Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife and Gulf State Park on a habitat restoration project for Florida Point. This involved moving 560,000 cubic yards of material unto the point and restoring dunes with vegetation.
- Worked with the Mississippi/Alabama Sea Grant to construct an artificial reef-wave attenuation structure along the shore of Alonzo Landing on the eastern end of Dauphin Island. This was successful on creating additional marine habitat and shoreline protection.
- Continued to work with county and municipal governments in updating and review of land use and zoning ordinances, comprehensive and strategic plans, hazard mitigation planning and watershed planning.
- Completed public access projects at the Tensaw Delta Coastal Resource Center and Helen Wood Park.
- Worked with the University of Alabama in a survey and report on all commercial and industrial wells located on the Fort Morgan Peninsula. The report was completed and a model and capture zone assessment completed.
- Worked with the Alabama Geological Survey to complete a study on Gulf front beach monitoring titled "Topographic Monitoring for 2004-2005, Short Term Shoreline Change Analysis 1990-2002, and Episodic Change and Erosion from Hurricane Ivan 2004."
- Provided \$88,000 in federal matching funds to accomplish coastal nonpoint pollution control program projects, including: continuation of the Alabama-Mississippi Clean Marina Program, workshops on wetland evaluation, pesticide container recycling, and monitoring and tracking of septic tank maintenance in Mobile and Baldwin counties.
- Collected public comment and completed the Alabama Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program Implementation Strategy, which will guide future land acquisition efforts in southwest Alabama.
- Completed the second year of the second five year session of the monthly National Marine Debris Monitoring Program. Data of this monitoring can be found at www.coastalcleanup.org/mdm/nationalMap.cfm.
- Completed a study on bacteriological monitoring in the Fowl River watershed in Mobile County.
- Inducted Harbor Pointe Marina in Dadeville, Alabama as the third certified clean marina of the Alabama-Mississippi Clean Marina Program.
- Supported and assisted facilitation of a county wide "Don't Drop It on Alabama!" spring litter clean up in Baldwin County where 220 volunteers collected 7,100 pounds of trash.
- Participated in 13 public education and outreach events including the Annual Bay Area Earth Day, International Migratory Bird Day, Environmental Studies Center's Open Houses, and Mobile County/City Day.
- Coordinated and facilitated thirty educational programs on environmental topics of the coastal area for the Gatra L. Nature Center reaching approximately 313 individuals.

Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

- Reserve Interpretive Center hosted an estimated 20,000 visitors from 50 states and several foreign countries.
- Prepared and submitted a revised Coastal Training Program Marketing Plan to the Oversight Committee; received tentative plan approval and entered implementation status.
- GIS support was upgraded with the addition of new computer system and software and continued to support staff needs including invasive species tracking, delineating potential areas for acquisition, map preparation and assisting Grand Bay NERR after Hurricane Katrina.
- Hosted coastal resource manager and professional educational workshops on topics including Website Content Design and Evaluation, Grant Writing Basics, Community Leader Wastewater Training, Stormwater Runoff, Watershed Management and Nonpoint Source Pollution, NPDES Stormwater Permit compliance and design for the transportation industry and Wetland Information for Real Estate Professionals.
- Hosted a Weeks Bay Volunteer Appreciation Day in April for volunteers.
- Coordinated ongoing development of the Baldwin County Grasses in Classes Program and cooperation with at least three restoration projects requiring plant materials.
- Conducted onsite education programs for 1,345 K-12 students and 267 adult chaperones.

- With several local and state partners, organized and hosted offsite the two-day Second Annual Baldwin County Water Festival for over 1,100 Baldwin County fourth grade, 46 teachers and approximately 150 adult and high school volunteers.
- Research staff maintained System-wide Monitoring Project and hosted and assisted researchers from 25 different research organizations including universities, State and local governmental bodies, federal governmental organizations and research foundations.
- Hosted Weeks Bay Research Symposium including speakers from several federal agencies, colleges and universities, Weeks Bay Graduate Research Fellows and Weeks Bay Staff.
- Conducted the Ninth Annual Weeks Bay Area River Cleanup and hosted a cleanup zone as part of the Eighteenth Annual Alabama Coastal Cleanup.
- Initiated assessment of invasive exotic species on recently acquired property and feasibility of the formation of a citizen volunteer based watch program designed to document and evaluate invasive species impact within the Weeks Bay watershed.
- Staff participated in several regional events and serve on various local, state and NERR System committees that enhance coastal decision-making and capacity-building in the coastal community and promote the mission and awareness of the Reserve.
- Continued efforts to address impaired waters issues including pathogens and mercury through collaborative research efforts, on-the-ground projects, volunteer and professional water quality monitoring and stakeholder programs within the Weeks Bay watershed.



State Parks



The State Parks Division operates and maintains 22 state parks encompassing approximately 48,000 acres of land and water in Alabama. The parks range from Gulf Coast beaches to Appalachian Mountains providing opportunities and facilities from basic day-use activities, to resort convention lodging, restaurant and golfing areas.

The mission of the Division is to acquire and preserve natural areas; to develop, furnish, operate and maintain recreational facilities, and to extend the public's knowledge of the state's natural environment.

The Division's goals are to manage and operate the State Parks system in an economically sound and efficient manner on the most self-sustaining basis possible; to provide and maintain high quality facilities and services to meet the needs of visitors; to provide an opportunity for personal growth and development of individuals through outdoor experiences; to promote use of State Parks facilities; to preserve unique natural features and integrity of State Parks for future generations and to promote good will and enhance the public image of Alabama, and the Alabama State Parks through dedicated, courteous employees.

Accomplishments

The division continued to operate and maintain 22 state parks serving more than 4.4 million guests annually on a constantly decreasing operational budget. Additional significant accomplishments were made in improving purchasing procedures, computer systems, operation and maintenance policies, financial management analysis, advertising and marketing, natural resource management and the continuous coordination, supervision and implementation of a comprehensive statewide, state parks renovations program.

Facilities and Personnel

Each of the 22 operational state parks has an internal park staff determined by size, development and operation of each area. Total employees for all parks vary from approximately 800 during peak season to approximately 600 during the off-season.

The Parks Division central office in Montgomery includes six sections: Administrative, Operations and Maintenance, Purchasing, Management Analysis, Natural Resources and Advertising/Marketing, and operates with 19 full-time and 3 part-time staff.

Problems and Solutions

Lack of sufficient funds for total renovation and repair of aging facilities and replacement of worn out equipment

is the major problem for State Parks. A source of steady, level funding to support prioritized facility maintenance is the necessary solution to this problem. It is hoped that increased park utilization and revenue generated as stimulated by the progressing renovations will be a solution to this basic parks issue.

MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS SECTION

The responsibilities and functions of the Management Analysis Section are to provide general administrative direction and coordination for management control, administrative cost analysis, performance reporting, data processing, general accounting, budgeting, payables, receivables, and purchasing.

Accomplishments

Section personnel received, processed and analyzed 2,076 performance reports for all state parks; prepared Park System Performance Reports as required by the Budget Management Act; received, processed and analyzed operations plans, budget reports and related reports; prepared Park System Operation Plans and fiscal year budgets; processed approximately \$34,937,079.57 in receipts and 16,139 payment vouchers; and disbursed approximately 23,598 warrants and payroll checks through and from the State Accounting System.

Section staff also continuously monitored data processing output, distributed it to statewide park cost centers, and monitored managerial audits as well as personnel actual versus budget for each state park. Management Analysis is continuing to work with Central Accounting Data Processing and developing detailed monthly financial statements as it relates to overall financial aspects of the State Parks System as well as specific operations. Management Analysis continued to revise resale inventory procedures to promote better accountability.

Future Plans

- Increase programming to streamline automated accounting at park level in order to monitor business and personnel.
- Continue to improve monthly financial reports generated through IT Data Processing to aid managers in making financial decisions relating to business and personnel.
- Analyze individual park facilities to determine the cost effectiveness.

NATURAL RESOURCES SECTION

The Natural Resources Section was created in 1982 to manage the natural, scientific and biological aspects of all State Park land and water areas. Administrative functions include managing, protecting and enhancing state parks' natural resources and providing opportunities for public access and enjoyment of natural resource areas via nature trails, environmental programs and special events. This section also coordinates in-house State Parks grants administration.

Accomplishments

State Parks are normally thought of as land and water areas, of some natural or scenic significance, set aside for public enjoyment. Thus, it is within this concept that the Natural Resources Section strives to provide opportunities for park guests to better understand and enjoy these various natural wonders. In this concept, many park guests are entertained and educated through interpretive recreational activity and environmental education programs each year. Interpretive naturalist programs are conducted at Gulf, Oak Mountain, DeSoto, and Lake Guntersville State Parks. In this effort Natural Resources personnel assisted with a variety of public outreach programs, audio-visual and live presentation programs on tree identification, waterfowl, songbirds, raptors and other environmental topics; updated hiking and nature trail maps; and assisted in upgrading trails at Oak Mountain State Park.

Natural Resources staff produced brochure and magazine materials, attended the 2005 State Park Naturalist Seminar, planned several Earth Day activities, maintained and improved the bi-weekly Park Naturalist Information Coordination Program, consulted with and served on boards of organizations, and implemented a plan to reestablish 200 acres of longleaf pine and the future enhancement of a pitcher plant/longleaf pine community at Gulf State Park.

Personnel expanded an introductory course in basic fire management in the spring for parks field personnel. Further planning towards establishing classes through the Wildland Fire Academy at Oak Mountain State Park were finalized as were plans to establish prescribed burn areas in five other state parks. Section personnel also coordinated and conducted a variety of research programs pertaining to white-tailed deer over populations at Oak Mountain and Lake Guntersville, and assisted in conducting two deer population reduction public hunts at Oak Mountain State Park.

Natural Resources staff also participated in Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Nongame Wildlife program events, Forever Wild Land Acquisition evaluations, and National Fishing Day events. Said staff also applied for and received grant funding extensions for beach habitat enhancement at Gulf State Park and Recreation Trails Program funds for Peavine Falls Trailhead and Eagle Trail at Oak Mountain State Park.

Natural Resources staff additionally coordinated the

construction of three federally funded transient boat piers at Joe Wheeler State Park. Similar federal grant applications were prepared, submitted and approved for a similar transient boat piers at Lakepoint Resort and Lake Guntersville State Parks, both to be constructed within the next 12 months.

Staff coordinated scientific collection permit requests for various park locations; aided in the Perdido Key Beach Mouse Study at Alabama Point and Gulf State Park; conducted fish management programs at park lakes; conducted aquatic vegetation reduction programs in various state park lakes; coordinated diseased timber removal statewide; assisted with forest insect and fungus research projects; conducted forest fire danger notification and suppression programs and coordinated contract preparation, timber marking and removal following southern pine beetle damage at various state parks.

The Section also continued its successful timber management program designed to improve park recreational potential, forest health and improved wildlife habitat. In the past fiscal year, fuel reduction/wildlife habitat enhancement prescribe burns were completed in 10 state parks and totaled 1,289 acres. In addition, timber stand improvement/wildlife habitat enhancement thinning and salvage operations were conducted in three parks that totaled 293 acres and generated \$303,045 in state park revenue. Tree planting initiatives on approximately 50 acres were also accomplished.

In September 2004, Hurricane Ivan had a significant, devastating and prolonged impact on the natural resources of Gulf State Park. As a result of this natural disaster, the Parks Natural Resource Section immediately began to evaluate the overall environmental damage. It was determined that about 45 percent of the park vegetation (trees, woody understory, etc.) was either destroyed by wind, storm surge and/or saltwater intrusion into a normally freshwater environment. Additionally, it is anticipated that the prolonged affect of the saltwater intrusion will continue to kill vegetation for an undetermined period. One of the most immediate and detrimental problems encountered was that the storm killed, compressed and added to the pre-existing understory additional debris and vegetation resulting in a 65 to 80 percent increase in forest fuels susceptible to wildfire. With funding from a FEMA grant, planning and coordination from the Parks Natural Resource Planner and assistance from Park staff, Forestry Commission staff, Lands Division staff, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff and both the Gulf Shores and Orange Beach Fire Departments, we were able to establish the necessary fire lanes to burn 566 acres between December 2004 and April 2005. Subsequently, 2.7 miles of wet fire lanes have been cleared and 3.5 miles of dry fire lanes have been marked to push. Also, many impacted park trails, rights of way and walkways have been marked/cleared under FEMA contract. Additional work will continue into next fiscal year beginning with the prescribe burn of a 455-acre area north of the campground to reduce the

wildfire potential in that public use area. Additional environmental concerns and actions will continue for years to come to repair the damage from this natural disaster.

Natural Resources personnel reviewed and commented on hundreds of environmental compliance permit requests and reviewed and approved numerous collection permit applications where appropriate. Land encroachment, boundary line disputes/discrepancies and conflicts are handled continuously. In this effort, the section continues to upgrade Alabama State Parks deed files to establish procedures to maintain verified boundaries.

In 2002, the Natural Resources Section also assumed current and future responsibility for coordination, administration and management of all Alabama State Parks Alabama Bass Trail duties including tournament scheduling, logistical planning, contract negotiation and preparation, tournament facility improvements and on-site supervision.

Trapping and relocation of giant Canada Geese also continues, as necessary, in various State Parks.

Problems and Solutions

The section continues to face the problem of insufficient funding for serious problems such as correcting lake siltation at numerous parks, expanding the environmental education program, constructing much-needed nature centers, conducting whitetail deer overpopulation research programs and initiating a greatly needed and long overdue park boundary survey and marking program. Funds have not been available for these projects, and solutions are still being sought.

Future Plans

- Expand environmental education and interpretative facilities, activities and staff as needs and funds justify.
- Recommend construction of a nature center at Lake Guntersville; redesign Oak Mountain's nature center; add an interpretive program and possible facility at Joe Wheeler State Park, continue construction of natural habitat exhibits, and expand the nature center at Gulf State Park.
- Increase special winter events.
- Expand park timber and understory plant management to improve wildlife habitat carrying capacity, park aesthetics and timber production capability.
- Manage healthy wildlife populations compatible with habitat carrying capacity and enhance public wildlife observation opportunities.
- Manage aquatic programs for environmental quality and public enjoyment.
- Facilitate more training opportunities for parks' field personnel in wildland fire behavior and prescription burn practices.
- Seek greater awareness of State Parks through articles in magazines and other publications.
- Produce trail maps and natural resource management brochures and increase public communication to strengthen environmental responsibility among park guests.

- Explore the possibility of collecting field data through Geographical Information Systems to enable State Parks to more adequately inventory natural resources and produce color-coded maps of significant importance.

Operations and Maintenance

The Operations and Maintenance Section provides daily supervision for park managers and superintendents to ensure that more than 4 million annual park visitors enjoy high quality recreation facilities and services. The Operations and Maintenance Section staff logs many hours in the field inspecting facilities and equipment, investigating complaints and providing guidance to field personnel.

The section staff supervises a 17-person construction crew composed of a supervisor, carpenter supervisors, electricians, masons, and carpenters. The crew works on large and small projects in all parks that require more labor or skill than is available at the park level. The Operation Section staff is involved in pre-construction meetings with architects planning the renovation projects that are currently in progress or that are completed.

Section personnel reviewed, approved and forwarded to the personnel section more than 800 hourly employee personnel action forms. Nine merit system positions were filled.

Law enforcement training was conducted and coordinated by the operations staff for 41 state park officers.

More than 1,000 accident/incident/offense and arrest reports were submitted by the parks to this section for review and analysis.

Park Operations section personnel work with auditors and park staff to account for more than 4,786 inventory items valued at \$13,291,387. The Operation Section processes the transfer, addition and deletion of inventory items.

Staff filed a significant number of insurance claims with Risk Management on various park structures. The largest claims were for damages to the lodge and hotel complex at Gulf State Park as Hurricane Ivan made landfall on September 15, 2004. Meaher State Park also received significant damage by Hurricane Katrina on August 29, 2005. A yearly review of insurance coverage is conducted to ensure that adequate coverage is maintained on the 824 park structures.

The section staff continues an ongoing relationship with the Federal Emergency Management Agency on various projects associated with damages by Hurricane Ivan and Katrina. Operations staff is also working closely with FEMA in providing of temporary housing in cabins and hotels and intermediate housing in 1,500 campsites to evacuees from Hurricane Katrina and Rita. The FEMA sheltering program is expected to continue into spring 2006.

The Section staff investigated and made recommendations on 41 Board of Adjustment claims that were filed against the State Parks Division. The section staff represented the Parks Division at Board of Adjustment hear-



ings and testified concerning these claims before the Board.

An equipment inspection and evaluation program is conducted by section staff to determine equipment needs and priorities.

The State Park Operations and Maintenance Section staff and Construction Crew worked on or completed the following projects this year:

DeSoto – The 1,660-square-foot metal roof on the swimming pool building was replaced.

Bucks Pocket – A half mile of road to the primitive camping area was rebuilt after being washed out by spring flooding.

Cathedral Caverns – The road to the maintenance was rebuilt after being washed out.

Cheaha – A restroom was built at the parking area for the Doug Ghee accessible boardwalk.

Chewacla – An apartment used for staff housing was repaired and work began to install six-foot fencing around sink hole areas in the park.

Gulf – All five of the fishing piers and gazebos in front of the lakeside cabins were repaired after Ivan damaged them by 70 percent. The staff house in the campground and Cotton Bayou were completely renovated after being flooded by tidal surge from Ivan. Several more houses had ceilings replaced due to water damage from Ivan. A ticket booth at the picnic area was built to replace the one destroyed by Ivan. The 2,800-foot picnic area chain link fence was replaced with a vinyl fence. The roofs were replaced on the three picnic area pavilions. During the year limbs and debris were removed and repairs made to buildings damaged by Hurricanes Ivan and Katrina.

Meaher – The park office and maintenance shop were replaced after being destroyed by Katrina. The crew will continue to work on repairs to this park that was heavily damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

Lakepoint – A used trailer was purchased, renovated and will be used as a marina store while the building is being renovated. Two sewage lift stations were repaired with new pumps and pipe.

Lake Lurleen – The electrical wiring was replaced on six campsites and drainage installed around the park office.

Monte Sano – The roofs were replaced on three houses and four rustic trail shelters.

Oak Mountain – A 10-by-12-foot ballhouse was built on the driving range to house the machines that dispense driving range balls. A 500-foot cart path, parking lot flow-erbed and numerous other projects were completed at the pro shop. One of the golf course restrooms was renovated.

Rickwood – New concrete edging was poured around the pool and electrical wiring was replaced on one campsite.

Joe Wheeler – Two rustic cabins were renovated. A restroom was built for the main boat ramp area. The swimming bath house had over 9,000 square feet of decking replaced.

Wind Creek – A 575-foot seawall was built in the campground at the site where seven small camping cabins will be constructed on campsites. A new bathhouse and laundry has been completed in the “B” section of the campground. The decking and handrail was replaced on the park’s 210-foot fishing pier.

STATE PARKS PROMOTIONS

The Alabama State Parks Promotions Section was created in 1983 to coordinate the overall advertising, marketing and promotional efforts of the Alabama State Parks system. The section currently employs three people in the Montgomery office.

Administrative functions include coordination of radio and television public service announcements; preparation and distribution of promotional literature; coordination of print and photographic material for magazines, campground directories, and newspaper articles; cooperation and coordination with the Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, chambers of commerce, convention and visitors bureaus, tourist association and special events promoters; evaluation of advertising opportunities; purchasing of advertising space; production of ads and advertising materials; assistance with individual State Parks promotional efforts; participation in travel shows, sport and boat shows, special events, and State Fair exhibits; continuous updating of slides and photos; presentation of programs for various organizations; and the operation of the Central Reservations State Park service to the public.

Accomplishments

This past year the Promotions Section coordinated, developed and assisted in the promotions of various state parks ads and articles for print in mostly in-state and some out-of-state magazines and newspapers. These include *Alabama Golf*, *Alabama Vacation Guide*, and the *Birmingham Tourist Guide*. Ads are alternated between the nation’s largest two campground directory guides. Last year our ad was placed in *Trailer Life*; next year it will return to *Woodall’s Campground Directory*. Ads for Joe Wheeler, Lake Guntersville, Monte Sano, Cathedral

Caverns and Buck's Pocket State Parks were placed in *Inside Huntsville*. Ads were also placed in *Bama*, *Inside the Crimson Tide* and *Inside the Auburn Tigers*. These two magazines provide detailed and up-to-date information regarding these two school's sports programs. We reach over 27,000 subscribers of these magazines plus another 10,000 who purchase them at newsstands. The newspaper "Southeastern RV'ers" was made available to all the campers visiting the parks. In exchange, we have received several articles and stories in the paper. We have also place ads in the paper on occasion. Our resort and larger parks have been listed on the Web site www.landbigfish.com as an avenue to attract anglers to those parks noted for their fishing amenities.

Promotions has continually improved and reprinted the individual state park resort brochures to satisfy the growing tourism industry and public. The comprehensive state parks booklet that was introduced last year is in its second printing. A new brochure for Rickwood Caverns State Park was produced. In addition, newly designed brochures for Joe Wheeler and Cheaha Mountain State Parks were produced. A new brochure for DeSoto State Park is being printed along with the 2005-2006 Rate Brochure.

The Volunteer In Parks (VIP) program continues to provide much-needed help through-out the year at a number of parks. Three positions are vital to our V.I.P. program success. They are Seasonal Permanent Campground Hosts, Monthly Campground Hosts, and Activities Director. Every park that has 50 or more campsites should have these positions filled at all times. Due to a lack of sufficient staff during the seasonal camping months, there is a need for volunteers in these positions.

The Promotions Section was involved in several ribbon cutting and ground breaking events. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held at Gulf State Park and for the reopening of the campground with the first 100 completely renovated campsites. Shortly after, we broke ground for the new pavilion being constructed on the beach. This will be a modern pavilion with comfort stations. In conjunction with the pavilion we also recognized the construction of new cabins on Lake Shelby.

The newly renovated marina and grill at Lakepoint State Park was dedicated and a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new cottages completed at Lakepoint was held.

The Promotions Section participated in the Alabama National Fair in Montgomery. Nearly 1,600 people registered for a free weekend at an Alabama State Park. We also participated in the 2005 Snowbird Extravaganza held annually in Lakeland, Florida. Thousands of snowbirds from a number of northern states and Canada attend the event every year.

The department launched a new Web site last year. This past year the State Parks Division Web site was updated. Each park has the capability to update their page with information regarding special events and other activities.

Special Events

The Golf Course at Oak Mountain was reopened following renovations. After the pro shop and landscaping was finished a grand opening was held in July 2006. The ribbon cutting ceremony was expanded to include a Golf Appreciation Day Tournament. Invited guests along with individuals that play the course regularly participated in the event. Participants played free and were treated to lunch. We also provided a nice T-bag with gifts for all those that played. The event was a success and received many positive comments including a suggestion that the Golf Appreciation Day become an annual event.

In September, the Promotions Section held the First Annual Lake Martin Fall Car Show at Wind Creek State Park in Alexander City. Money was raised from local businesses and individuals to put on the event. The show attracted a variety of vehicles and provided some great entertainment for those attending.

Problems and Solutions

There are numerous ways to promote the State Parks. The opportunities and ideas as to how to do this are unlimited. Lack of sufficient staff is the primary problem. Lack of funds is also a problem, although through the creative planning of special events and encouraging others to use the parks as their venue for special events, we can produce new and unique ways to introduce our parks to individuals who may not ordinarily visit them. Some state law restrictions make it difficult to have special events in our Alabama State Parks. By relaxing some of these restrictions, it will enable us to plan, finance and conduct these special events more frequently.

Lack of sufficient advertising funds limits our ability to stay in front of the public's eye through the printed media, radio or television.

Future Plans

We will continue to increase public awareness and encourage patronage of the Alabama State Parks through a variety of advertising and promotional opportunities such as *Alabama Golf*, *Alabama Vacation Guide* and *Woodall's Campground Directory*. We will be evaluating the *Birmingham Tourist Guide* for next year as well as landbigfish.com. There is a high probability we will continue to advertise in the *Inside Bama* and *Auburn* magazines because of their popularity and the interest our citizens have with these two institutions.

A continued effort will be directed toward revision of each resort state park brochure with Joe Wheeler, Cheaha and DeSoto park brochures completed. The Lakepoint and Gulf State Park brochures will be updated as renovations approach completion. Other non-resort parks are being considered for color brochures.

We will be participating at the Snowbird Extravaganza consumer show again in January. We are producing a

state parks calendar as our promotional item this year. Extra copies will be sold in some of the park gift shops. Also, we will have a booth at the national fair in October.

On May 6, 2006 we will hold our second car show at Wind Creek State Park. After investing in our first car show, we expect this one to be a profitable event for the park.

Our best opportunity to promote the Alabama State Parks during 2006 will most likely come from the Department of Tourism and Travels declaration of 2006 as "Year of Outdoor Alabama." We will be working closely with Tourism and Travel and are optimistic the interest created during the "Year of Food" promotion will provide additional enthusiasm for the new campaign. Since Alabama State Parks offer a variety of outdoor activities, we expect to benefit greatly from this year's slogan.

PURCHASING SECTION

The State Parks Purchasing Section handles all purchasing activities for 22 State Parks, six golf courses and five motel and lodge complexes. Money for these purchases comes from various sources, such as bond money, timber sales, donations, insurance, park revenues, FEMA, federal grants and other funds.

The Purchasing Office maintains a record of purchases, assists in paying vendors and works with Management Analysis Section to assure accurate accounting data.

The Purchasing Section consists of one supervisor, one full-time clerical and one part-time clerical employee, and operates under the laws and guidelines established by the Code of Alabama, Title 41, and the policies and procedures established by the Alabama Department of Finance.

Accomplishments

Accomplishments for the Purchasing Office for Fiscal Year 2005 include routine purchases, emergency purchases and annual agreements. Most purchases were of a routine nature to continue operations. There were many emergency purchases due to Hurricanes Ivan and Katrina caused by wind and flood damage at Meaher, Gulf and other state parks.

Some purchases during the year included those involved in housing hurricane evacuees at the state parks, including temporary mailboxes and offices. Other large purchases included golf course greens covers, campground entrance/exit gates, sewage water sampling services (required by ADEM), uniforms, and various other services and commodities. Increased gas prices during the year caused increases in cost of goods and services.

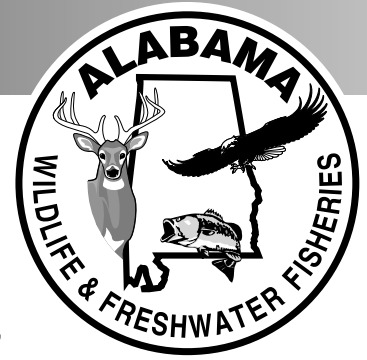
Personnel of the purchasing section attended and assisted with various events.

Future Plans

- Continue to provide services to parks and lodges for their daily purchasing needs, as well as during renovations and ongoing maintenance projects.
- Continue to be of service to support the Alabama State Parks system in areas of need, including helping to maintain the Web site.



Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries



The Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, charged by law with protection, management and enhancement of the state's fish and wildlife resources, is composed of the Administrative, Enforcement, Fisheries and Wildlife Sections. The Division meets these responsibilities by carrying out coordinated, scientifically sound enforcement, management, research, development, and educational programs designed to ensure protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife populations and habitats for the sustainable benefit of the people of Alabama.

Significant Accomplishments

The Youth Dove Hunting program was expanded to 31 sites across the state with approximately 1,395 participants, 22.2 percent of which were first-time hunters. The Community Fishing Program conducted 63 events with over 11,378 participants. The North Alabama Birding Trail opened to visitors in September 2005. The Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center was established. Division personnel assisted in Hurricane relief efforts in Alabama and Mississippi.

WILDLIFE AND FRESHWATER FISHERIES

Administrative

The Administrative Section carried out support services regarding personnel, budget, accounting, licenses, and property management. Activities were monitored and documentation maintained to ensure compliance with Federal Aid requirements. Planning and coordination of Division programs were conducted. Staff members served on committees, attended meetings and answered correspondence to coordinate activities with those of other organizations.

There are 11 staff members in the Section: one Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Director, one Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Assistant Director, one Aircraft Pilot II, one Conservation Management Analyst, two Biologist III's, one Biologist II, one Accounting Technician I, one ASA III, and three ASA II's.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY

State Wildlife Grants and the Landowner Incentive Program are two relatively new federal funding sources intended to focus management on declining wildlife species and avoid their eventual listing under the Endangered Species Act. Federal appropriation to Alabama in FY05

for these programs was \$1,144,630. These funds are used to support various research and species restoration efforts, including establishment of the Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center (administered by the Fisheries Section) and completion of the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. These programs are administered by two biologists in the Administrative Section who work closely with Wildlife Section and Fisheries Section staffs. The Alabama Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy was completed and approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Enforcement Section

The Law Enforcement Section of the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries assists in management and enhancement of Alabama's wildlife and freshwater fish resources through a sound enforcement program.

Facilities and Personnel

The Law Enforcement Section is headquartered in the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries office in Montgomery. This office is staffed by the Chief Enforcement Officer, an Assistant Chief of Operations, an Assistant Chief of Administration (vacant), one Captain, two ASA IIs, one ASA III, one Account Clerk, five Police Communications Officers I, and three part-time radio operators (vacant). The Montgomery staff processes vehicle repairs; orders, receives, and issues supplies and equipment; issues permits; conducts investigations; coordinates training; provides information to officers and the public regarding laws and regulations; provides guidance to officers and the public on enforcement issues; and performs other duties involving the enforcement program.

2004-2005

Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Law Enforcement Statistics

Arrests	6,776
Warnings	1,060

The field staff is organized into six districts with a captain as supervisor and two lieutenants as assistant supervisors. Each district supervisor is assigned to a district office. Each district varies in size from nine to 12 counties with two officers in most counties. The section's investigative unit is staffed with one lieutenant as supervisor and four investigator positions (two vacant) that have the rank of sergeant. A special task force consists of retired officers who are APOST certified. These officers are employed on a part-time basis and are used in problem areas of the state or where vacancies exist. The Law Enforcement Section is authorized 130-uniformed field officers. Eighteen of these positions are sergeants who are field supervisors with three per district. Currently, the Section has 94 field officers on staff due to retirements and resignations. Currently, vacancies include one area sergeant and 18 field officers.

Awards/Recognition

- Officer Mike Heath of Barbour County received the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Officer of the Year Award for Alabama.
- The National Wild Turkey Federation recognized Conservation Enforcement Officer Ernie Stephens of Fayette County as Alabama's Officer of the Year.
- Officer Don Condrey of Lauderdale County received the Shikar Safari International's Wildlife Officer of the Year Award for Alabama.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Special Operations

Thirty-one officers were deployed to the Mississippi Gulf Coast and 47 officers to south Mobile County to assist in recovery efforts following Hurricane Katrina. Officers performed search and rescue, maintained law and order, escorted and distributed supplies, and a variety of other acts of assistance as needed.

Arrests and Warnings

Officers made 6,776 arrests and issued 1,060 warnings during the 2004-2005 fiscal year, the majority being for violations of Fish and Wildlife regulations with the remainder being for violations of Marine Police, Marine Resources, and other state laws.

The section initiated a service request tracking system to monitor long-term trends in the section's public service effectiveness.

Training of Officers and Supervisors

- Officers and supervisors completed semi-annual fire arms training.
- Officers and supervisors completed refresher training in PPCT and SSGT self-defense tactics.



- Training was conducted in the use of a license/permit manual, which is utilized by field officers and office personnel.
- A redesigned training program for new officers was implemented.
- In-service training in fish and wildlife law enforcement tactics was conducted.

Equipment Purchases

- Two new boats were received as a result of a litigation settlement.
- Seventeen new vehicles were purchased to replace unreliable law enforcement patrol vehicles.
- One hundred new hand-held radios were purchased to replace many of the 19-year-old radios currently in use.
- Two VHF radio repeaters and four antennas damaged by Hurricane Katrina were replaced.
- Out-of-date body armor for 106 field officers was replaced.
- One hundred twenty-five GPS units were purchased to assist field officers in responding to violator activity.

Recruitment

- Nine recruits were hired as Conservation Enforcement Officers. They are assigned to the following counties: Choctaw (two), Marengo, Marshall, Montgomery, Sumter (two), Tuscaloosa and Wilcox.
- Interest in vacant Conservation Enforcement Officer positions is high and the announcement of the CEO examination always results in several hundred applicants taking the examination.
- The CEO position began to be announced on a continuous recruitment basis. This should be valuable in the recruitment of quality applicants.

FUTURE PLANS

- Hiring new officers to fill critical vacancies will be a priority within budget constraints.
- Fill the vacant assistant chief position in the Montgomery office.
- Complete work on a comprehensive arrest database that can be utilized by all divisions of the Department.

FISHERIES SECTION

Responsibilities and Functions

The Fisheries Section's mission is to protect, conserve and increase the freshwater aquatic resources of Alabama.

Facilities and Personnel

There are 70 staff members in the Section including fisheries biologists, fisheries biologist aides, a malacologist, clerk stenographers, account clerks, administrative support assistants, building maintenance supervisors, a carpenter, equipment operators and laborers. Fisheries Section facilities include six permanent district offices with laboratories. The Section has three sport fish hatcheries and one hatchery dedicated to producing mussels, snails and fish species of concern with hatching and holding buildings, personnel residences and storage buildings. Twenty-three state-owned public fishing lakes in 20 counties have a total surface area of 1,912 acres. Each of the 20 locations has a concession building, storage building, and in some cases, a residence.

Accomplishments

Technical Assistance: District fisheries biologists conducted 884 biological checks of farm ponds. Individuals requesting assistance were given appropriate solutions to problems in writing. The Fisheries Section reviewed, investigated and commented on 362 water-related permits and environmental impact statements. Written comments were provided to the appropriate agencies. Numerous staff members participated in meetings concerning the relicensing of nine Alabama Power Company hydroelectric projects. District biologists investigated 19 reported fish kills and cases of pollution. Formal reports prepared by the investigators were sent to the appropriate agencies.

Public Fishing Lakes: A total of 145,945 anglers harvested 244,322 fish weighing 198,458 pounds from all 23 state-operated public fishing lakes. Each angler averaged 1.4 pounds of fish per trip. These figures represent a decrease of 11 percent and 2 percent respectively, from the number and weight of fish harvested in FY04. The number of anglers fishing on Alabama's State Lakes decreased approximately 3 percent from FY04. Fisheries biologists and support personnel made 819 visits to State Lakes to evaluate the condition of fish populations and to conduct operational and maintenance activities. The Carbon Hill, Eastaboga, and Marion fish hatcheries stocked 1,438,873 fish into Alabama's State Lakes. Species stocked included bluegill, channel catfish, largemouth bass, redear sunfish, black crappie, and white amur. An additional 3,100 pounds of rainbow trout were stocked into Madison County Lake.

New lake managers were hired at Geneva, Pike, and Walker County Lakes. Lake Manager contracts were renewed at Lamar and Clay County Lakes. New accessible fishing piers were completed at Lamar and Geneva County Lakes.

Washington County Lake was renovated and restocked. Marginal treatments were conducted at Clay and Madison County Lakes.

Access Areas: During the year, 353 routine inspections of 118 access areas were made by Fisheries Section personnel. In excess of \$569,000 of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries funds were obligated to develop and maintain boating access areas in FY05.

Major accomplishments include the following: Smith Lake Park in Cullman County – restroom; Cliff's Landing in Baldwin County – dock repair; Stevenson in Marshall County – new facility; Opposite Mile 370 in Marshall County – repair ramp; Cedar Bluff in Cherokee County – lot striping; Rainbow City in Etowah County – lot striping; Honeycomb Creek and Brown's Creek in Marshall County – lot striping; Higgin's Ferry in Chilton County – restriping of parking lot; Scottsboro City Park in Jackson County – lot striping; Cullman County Park in Cullman

Table 1. Fish Stocked in Public Waters during 2004-05*

Species	Inch Group	Number
Largemouth Bass – Florida	1-10	537,554
Largemouth Bass - Northern	2-12	1,319
Smallmouth Bass	1-2	13,585
Alabama Spotted Bass	2	1,200
Striped Bass - Gulf Race	1	626,545
Hybrid Striped Bass	1-10	388,591
Channel Catfish	7-19	234,443
Bluegill	1-4	3,244,816
Redear	1-2	125,400
Black Crappie	3-6	61,024
White Amur (Grass Carp)	10-15	2,862
Rainbow Trout	8-11	13,946
TOTAL		5,251,285

*Includes state-owned and managed public fishing lakes

County—restriping of parking lot; storm clean-up at Elk River North and South Ramps in Lauderdale County; 28 new logo signs installed statewide.

Aquatic Plant Management: Aquatic plant communities were monitored to determine their impact on small boat navigation and fish populations in Alabama's public waters in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. During FY05, 28 acres of mixed emergent aquatic vegetation consisting of Cuban bulrush, alligator weed, water primrose, and giant cutgrass were treated in the Mobile Delta. In Dannelly Reservoir, 25 acres of alligator weed were treated to provide angler access in the lower reservoir. Over 740 acres of submerged, emergent, and floating vegetation were treated on Coffeeville, Demopolis, and Warrior reservoirs of the Black-Warrior and Tombigbee River System.

Presentations: Fisheries Section biologists attended public meetings and workshops on fisheries resource topics around the State. Biologists gave 318 presentations to the public about various aquatic resource topics. Aquatic education programs constituted 310 of those presentations.

Fish Hatcheries: The Carbon Hill, Eastaboga and Marion State Fish hatcheries distributed 61,521 largemouth bass and 593,830 bream to 121 new ponds (415 acres), 57 renovated old ponds (234.5 acres) and three ponds (6.75 acres) that needed corrective restocking of largemouth bass fingerlings. Fish were also stocked into public waters statewide through the Fisheries Section, including public fishing lakes, that totaled 5,251,285. This information is provided in Table 1.

Research: Through the Investigation and Management Techniques for Public Waters Project, three contractual studies were ongoing during the year. These studies involved research on the population characteristics of largemouth bass in the Mobile Delta, the effects of tournament fishing on the black bass population of Lake Martin, and an evaluation of the recreational catfish fishery in Wilson Reservoir. Three projects funded through WCRP grants were continued during FY05. These projects were an evaluation of habitat restoration in the Mobile Delta by means of treatment and control of exotic aquatic plants, a pilot small stream habitat survey and evaluation in Terrapin Creek, and research and production work for the publication of a comprehensive book on Alabama's freshwater mussel species.

Reservoir Management: Black bass, hybrid and striped bass, sauger, shad, crappie, bluegill, and redear populations were sampled by electrofishing, trap netting, trawling and/or gillnetting in Little Bear Creek, Wilson, Harris, Weiss, Inland Lake, Logan Martin, Bankhead, Demopolis, Claiborne, Martin, Yates, Jordan, Point A, and Eufaula reservoirs in addition to the upper and lower Mobile Delta. All fish collected were measured and weighed. Thermal and oxygen profiles were collected from most of these reservoirs. Reservoir reconnaissance surveys were com-

pleted on all reservoirs where standardized sampling was performed. Results of the surveys are incorporated into reservoir reports. Relative values of angler harvest, effort, and pressure were collected by creel surveys on Eufaula, Jones Bluff, Harris, and Wilson reservoirs. Creel data will be summarized for all locations and included in the appropriate reservoir reports.

General Survey: General fish sampling and surveys were conducted on Mitchell, Jones Bluff, Goat Rock, Oliver, Martin, Coffeeville, and Claiborne reservoirs. Fisheries survey work was also performed on the Mobile Delta, D'Olive Creek, Three-mile Creek, Coosa, Tallapoosa, and Alabama rivers. Samples of bass, catfish or representatives of other predator or omnivore groups were collected from several locations for a cooperative contaminant study with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

Endangered Species (Section-6) Studies: The Staff Malacologist conducted two endangered species (Tennessee River mussel and snail recovery and Cahaba River Basin Mollusk Survey) Section 6 studies in FY05. The Aquatic Resources Coordinator administered the following six additional Section 6 contractual studies in FY05: paddlefish population survey, endangered mussels of the Coosa and Cahaba survey, Bear Creek sedimentation survey, Elk River fish survey, coastal river's rare fish survey, and vermilion darter survey.

Aquatic Education (Community Fishing Program): The Fisheries Section, with assistance from other sections of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, conducted 63 community fishing events, reaching 11,378 participants plus their families and volunteers. Fishing classes were conducted for various audiences (mostly youth) during 95 sessions that reached 2,241 participants. Forty-three casting classes were given to 1,691 students. Rods and reels were loaned to physical education instructors who allowed students to practice casting. Two presentations were given to 12 teachers. In addition, 145 aquatic education talks about how aquatic resources function were presented to a total audience of 4,780. Additional information was presented to the public through displays and the fishing simulator for 25 days at events such as boat shows, fairs and Earth Day celebrations. Talking points were written for aquatic segments for the Outdoor Alabama television show. Three articles were written for Outdoor Alabama magazine; "Improving Bass Fishing Success," "Restoring Aquatic Wildlife" and "Diversity of Mussels in Bear Creek." An article titled "Spring Fishing" was published in the Alabama Forestry Association Magazine.

Freshwater Mussel Management and Research: A total of 42 biological field trips were made during this fiscal year for general and/or specialized surveys of mussel and snail populations and releases of relocated or cultured animals. Work sites included locations on the Locust Fork,

Cahaba, Conecuh, Alabama, Tennessee, Sipsey, Sipsey Fork, Choctawhatchee and Coosa rivers as well as numerous tributary streams such as Bear Creek, Colbert Co., Bullbarn Creek, Walker Co. and Shoal Creek, Cleburne County. Assistance and consultation regarding mollusk issues were provided to Tennessee Valley Authority, Alabama Department of Environmental Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Tennessee Aquarium Research Institute donated various species of cultured mussels and snails to the Fisheries Section. These aquatic organisms were stocked in State public waters by staff personnel (Tables 2 and 3).

Aquatic Resources Activities: The Nongame Fish Program has been renamed the Aquatic Resources Program to better reflect duties and jobs conducted by personnel in this program.

The following meetings were attended by the Aquatic Resources Coordinator: Gulf and South Atlantic Regional Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Spring Meeting, Risk Assessment Workshop on ANS, Mid-South Aquatic Plant Annual Meeting, Alabama Fisheries Association Annual Meeting, Geological Survey of Alabama (GSA) Stream Sampling Workshop, and the American Society of Ichthyologists Annual Meeting and the Southeastern Fishes Council Annual Meeting. The Aquatic Resources Coordinator was an invited presenter at the Scaphyrinchus 2005 Conference and the Alabama Rivers Association Watershed Conference. The first Alabama Crayfish Meeting was planned and coordinated, and participation with the rush darter working group continued. The Alabama Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force was formed in 2005 by executive order with the primary purpose of developing an ANS plan for Alabama.

Fish sampling in the tailwaters of Martin Dam continued in regard to future hydropower re-licensing issues. Field sampling to determine the status of the stippled darters was completed. Sampling for the southern walleye was initiated in Hatchet Creek. A tagging study to determine the population status of paddlefish in the Alabama

Table 3. Snails Stocked during FY05 in Public Waters through the Fisheries Section

Species	Location	Number
Flat Pebblesnail	Cahaba River	450
Plicate Rocksnail	Locust Fork (Warrior River)	19,812-24,812
Interrupted Rocksnail	Coosa River	3,052
Spotted Rocksnail	Cahaba River	87 juveniles 5 adults
Total		>23,406

River was initiated. Sampling continued for collection of Alabama sturgeon for broodstock; however, none were collected in FY05. Personnel assisted Auburn University Staff with shoal bass sampling in Chattahoochee River tributaries and GSA Staff with Gulf sturgeon sampling in the Perdido River. Stream sampling for species of concern continued in various streams.

The Aquatic Resources Coordinator reviewed and offered comments on the Draft Comprehensive Wildlife and Conservation Strategy, submitted a grant for fish habitat enhancement, revised the application for scientific collection permits, offered input as part of the black bass and walleye committees and administered protected species and public water stocking permits. Eight protected species and 10 public water stocking permits were issued in FY05. A summary of species stocked by non government interests is in Table 4.

Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center: The State Wildlife Grant (T-2) that was established to fund the development and operation of the Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center (AABC) became effective with this fiscal year. During FY05, the primary activities undertaken were to continue renovating and reactivating the buildings and facilities of the former Claude Harris National Aquaculture Research Center that is located adjacent to the Marion State Fish Hatchery in Perry County. Some of the accomplishments include: the renovation of Well #10, the primary well water supply for the main wet lab; replacement of the primary backup power generator with a new 100 kW diesel generator; installation of a new waste water treatment package plant; delivery and setup of a new manufactured residence for staff housing; continuation of building cleanup, renovation and repairs. The first two permanent staff positions were filled at the facility by mid June, a Plant Maintenance Supervisor I and a Biweekly Laborer. In addition, before the end of the year, a recommendation was submitted for the appointment of a Biologist III to serve as the Program Supervisor for the AABC with that employee scheduled to report to work in early FY06.

Table 2. Mussels Stocked during FY05 in Public Waters through the Fisheries Section

Species	Location	Number
Etowah Heelsplitter	Terrapin Creek	10,992
Southern Combshell	Coosa River	954
Alabama Moccasinshell	Coosa River	47
Total		11,993

Table 4. Non-Government Stockings during 2004-05

Species	Location	Number
Spiny Riversnail	Tennessee River	550 juveniles, 18 Adults
Black Crappie	Lake Weiss	50,000
Channel Catfish	Lake Logan Martin & Gunter'sville	5,500
Largemouth Bass - Northern	Lay Lake	20,000
Largemouth Bass - Florida	Lay Lake	17,510
TOTAL		93,578

Significant Problems/Solutions

Public Fishing Lakes: Bass crowding continues to be a problem statewide. Removal of bass by the use of anglers, electrofishing gear, along with judicious use of marginal treatments and slot limits, will be employed to manage overcrowded bass populations.

Recruitment of qualified lake managers at rural lakes continues to be a problem. This problem seems to be alleviated where suitable housing can be provided.

Washington County Lake remained closed due to draining and renovation. The lake was restocked in FY05 and will reopen in FY06.

There is a need to advertise and market these recreational fishing opportunities to the public.

Riverine Habitat: The loss of riverine habitat in Alabama has resulted in the decline or loss of obligate riverine fishes. Efforts continue to document habitat loss and provide suitable riverine habitat where possible. There is a need to develop a comprehensive plan for the permitting or managing of water withdrawals, water discharges and instream flow changes as it relates to the protection of aquatic habitat.

Aquatic Plants: The spread of established species of exotic aquatic vegetation and the loss of native aquatic plants remain an issue for Alabama waters. The threat of the introduction of other noxious plants to public waters is constantly present. Funding is inadequate, and our authority is limited for the control of existing vegetation problems and responding to reports of new introductions.

Fish Hatcheries: The goal of propagating Alabama sturgeon has not been achieved at this time due to the inability to acquire sufficient numbers of broodfish. Many production ponds including drain kettles, water supply

lines, drainage lines and power supply to the ponds are in need of renovation.

Future Plans

- Continue resurfacing parking lots at boating access areas and construct a new ramp on the Conecuh River in Escambia County in FY06.
- Renovate boat ramps in Chambers, Monroe, Mobile and Lauderdale counties.
- Monitor reservoir fish populations and riverine habitat.
- Expand riverine fish population sampling.
- Continue to search and collect Alabama sturgeon.
- Expand the activities at the Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center as soon as additional key facilities become operational and additional staff are hired. It is anticipated that significant culture and propagation activities for freshwater mollusks will be initiated during FY 06.

- Publication of the book *Freshwater Mussels of Alabama and the Mobile Basin in Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee* should be completed in FY 06.
- Expand efforts to introduce children to fishing and in raising awareness of aquatic resources which includes the appointment of a second aquatic education biologist for central Alabama

WILDLIFE SECTION

The mission of the Wildlife Section is to manage and enhance the wildlife resources of Alabama and to provide for maximum public benefit. The section maintains Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) to provide public access for hunting and recreation; monitors wildlife populations to determine management needs; provides the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Director recommendations on hunting season lengths, dates, bag limits and restrictions; provides technical assistance to landowners, managers and hunting clubs on wildlife and habitat management and harvest strategies to improve wildlife resources, and on animal damage control to protect crops and property as much as practical without undue damage to wildlife resources. The section provides technical assistance to other government agencies to help structure activities to avoid undue damage to wildlife and enhance those resources where possible. The section also provides information to the public on the natural history, problems and management needs of Alabama wildlife.

The section provides a Hunter Education Program to

train the public, especially beginning hunters, on safety, ethics and individual responsibilities of wildlife conservation.

Wildlife Section operations involve ongoing projects such as developing and maintaining wildlife openings, roads, buildings and boundary lines on 34 WMAs, two wildlife refuges and two sanctuaries (approximately 788,957 acres); administering public hunts on approximately 781,957 acres of WMA land; stocking wild turkeys; participating on boards and committees to provide input into plans and decisions affecting wildlife; conducting wildlife research and surveys and publishing the results; cooperating with universities to conduct wildlife research of mutual interest; administering a Nongame Wildlife Program; planning and coordinating environmental activities and review of impact statements; and administering the Alabama Cooperative Deer Management Assistance Program.

Facilities and Personnel

An administrative staff with offices in Montgomery coordinated and monitored operations within the Wildlife Section. The staff consisted of a Wildlife Chief, two Assistant Chiefs, one Forester, one Hunter Education Program Coordinator, one Nongame Wildlife Coordinator, one Wildlife Biologist and four clerical personnel.

Six districts across the state are staffed by a supervising wildlife biologist and include a number of area wildlife biologists and managers, biologist aides, equipment operators, clerical personnel and laborers. One nongame wildlife biologist is headquartered at Florence primarily for north Alabama assignments and one at Spanish Fort for south Alabama. One Hunter Education Coordinator is assigned at Cullman to handle north Alabama activities and one at Andalusia for south Alabama activities. A new Regional Hunter Education position was established in Montgomery to administer the program in Central Alabama.

Accomplishments

Wildlife Section personnel participated in meetings of the Mississippi Flyway Council, Alabama’s primary means of input into waterfowl management decisions that affect this

state. Fourteen states, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Canadian Wildlife Service, three Canadian Provinces and several private organizations participate each year. One assistant chief serves as the consultant to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service representing the southern region of the Mississippi Flyway Council.

Research and biological surveys were conducted to obtain information on wildlife and their habitats. Aerial waterfowl censuses and hunter bag checks were conducted in the Mobile Delta and on the Tennessee River during fall and winter. Aerial censuses were also conducted for bald eagles.

Information was collected on WMAs and other sites to determine deer hunter participation and success, the physical condition of deer and the current status of deer populations. Deer were collected at nine sites to assess reproductive characteristics within those populations. A hunting activity survey was conducted and published. The results were valuable in determining hunting season lengths and bag limits and evaluating the success of each hunting season.

An annual 28-survey-route mourning dove study was conducted with information shared with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to form season and bag limit regulations. As part of a nationwide project, 1,010 mourning doves were trapped, banded and released. Data from reported band returns will be analyzed to provide parameters needed for dove population modeling such as band return rates and estimates for mortality and survival. Also, 2,089 mourning dove wings were collected to provide data on age structure within mourning dove populations as part of the nationwide project.

Furbearer populations were evaluated by a survey in which the number of road kills and sightings of live animals near roads were recorded by Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries personnel to develop population indices.

A trial wild turkey production survey was initiated to provide data needed to construct population models for wild turkeys in Alabama.

Wildlife biologists participated in annual surveys to moni-

Wildlife Section Facilities

Montgomery	Central office and warehouse facilities
District I	District office (Tanner) and 7 WMAs
District II	District office (Jacksonville), 7 WMAs and 2 wildlife refuges
District III	District office (Northport), office (Demopolis), 6 WMAs

District IV	District office (Prattville), 4 WMAs
District V	District office (Spanish Fort), office (Jackson), 7 WMAs and 2 wildlife sanctuaries
District VI	District office (Andalusia), office (Enterprise) and 3 WMAs.

for the status of breeding birds in Alabama. The surveys include colonial nesting shorebirds in coastal Alabama, most notably on Gaillard Island where between 4,000 and 5,000 pairs of pelicans nest annually. Additionally, five routes of the Breeding Bird Survey were conducted as a contribution to the continent-wide monitoring of neotropical and other resident nesting species. Alabama caves were searched for threatened and endangered bat species.

Other bird surveys included participation in the International Migration Day count held in May. Development of the Alabama Breeding Bird Atlas continued, and wildlife biologists contributed to that database. Wildlife biologists participated in two National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts, coordinating and compiling one of the count circles.

The Nongame Wildlife Program received \$275,303 of federal aid funds for projects on wildlife species eligible for funding under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act. Population and status surveys were conducted for the gray bat, alligator snapping turtle, cerulean warbler, vermilion darter, and paddlefish. Systematic surveys were conducted on the Upper Tombigbee River, Coosa River, Black Warrior River, Paint Rock River and Tennessee River primary tributaries to document the presence of listed and candidate species of fish, snails, mussels and crayfish. Also, a project for habitat improvement for red-cockaded woodpeckers on the Talladega National Forest was continued in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service. Structuring of a Safe Harbor Plan for red-cockaded woodpeckers is in the final stages for implementation.

Wildlife biologists continued to monitor bald eagle overwintering and nesting populations in Alabama. A total of 110 bald eagles—88 adult and 22 immature—were recorded during the winter survey. Sixty-two confirmed nesting attempts were reported in 2005. The number of confirmed nesting attempts increased by nine compared with the previous year (53 nests), and by 15 since 2003 (47 nests). There have now been a total of 415 nesting attempts in the state since eagles resumed nesting in 1987. Each year the surveys continue to record an increase in the nesting bald eagle population within the state.

The Wildlife Section and Auburn University completed a study to assess the effects of growing season prescribed fire on productivity and survival of northern bobwhites. The results will be published during FY06. We are also cooperating with the U.S. Forest Service and Quail Unlimited on a project to improve habitat for red-cockaded woodpeckers and northern bobwhites on the Shoal Creek District of the U.S. Forest Service.

Over 1,300 man-days were devoted to providing technical assistance to private landowners, corporations, hunting clubs and government agencies. Biologists made on-site inspections, reviewed plans and provided recommendations for effective wildlife management. The Cooperative Deer Management Assistance Program included 310 landowners and hunting clubs covering more than

714,000 acres.

Providing landowners and land managers technical assistance to better help them implement strategies to improve wildlife habitat on their lands continues to grow in importance. An innovative partnership was developed with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to help private landowners obtain better wildlife management advice and to better deliver farm bill programs to landowners. Under a cost share agreement three WFF wildlife biologists work out of NRCS offices and work with NRCS personnel to deliver the programs. This program will continue and possibly expand.

Approximately 192,850 man-days of hunting occurred on WMAs. Harvest figures reached expected levels. These areas also furnish trapping, fishing, hiking, picnicking, camping and nature study opportunities. A total of approximately 2,568 miles of boundary lines, 9,102 acres of wildlife openings, and 1,949 miles of area roads were maintained.

The Hunting Trail for People with Physical Disabilities continues to be well received. The season opened with 15 sites on the trail. A new site in Cherokee County was developed and will be open to hunting in the 2005-06 season.

Eight shooting ranges on Wildlife Management Areas and the Etowah Public Shooting Range continue to receive excellent public use. These ranges are open to the public on a daily basis during daylight hours. Maintenance is conducted throughout the year by staff members and volunteers. Construction of the Southside Shooting Range at Oakmulgee WMA was completed during fiscal year 2005. Construction began on the Upper Delta WMA shooting range in Baldwin County during fiscal year 2005. That range should be completed during fiscal year 2006.

Section personnel manned booths at functions such as state and county fairs, gun and boat shows, and forest festivals, making personal contacts and distributing educational material. Numerous presentations in a variety of forums were made to help the public better understand wildlife conservation issues.

Opportunities for youth participation in hunting are not as numerous as we desire. The youth dove hunting program continued on 31 sites across the state. This is a cooperative effort with private landowners and other sponsors. The goal is to provide youth the opportunity to experience hunting in a positive atmosphere. There were 1,395 participants for the hunts scheduled in October 2004 and September 2005. The hunts were extremely popular with 22.2 percent of the youth being first time hunters. In addition, youth hunt opportunities were offered on the wildlife management areas for deer, turkey and waterfowl. The Conservation Advisory Board approved the first statewide youth deer hunt, which was very popular.

Articles written by section staff were distributed once a week to statewide media as "Wildlife and the Outdoors" columns. These popular features were published in many newspapers, magazines and newsletters throughout

Alabama and other states, and were effective in disseminating public information and increasing citizen awareness of services available from the Wildlife Section. Other articles were written for publication in specific magazines.

The North Alabama Birding Trail (NABT) opened for visitors in September of 2005 after more than four years of planning, development and construction. The NABT consists of 50 sites selected for their birdwatching characteristics and covers 11 north Alabama counties, in three extensive loops. During 2004-05, nine trail kiosks and over 300 interpretive, highway directional, and site wayfinding signs were constructed and erected. A 32-page trail visitor guide, which includes detailed trail information site descriptions and directions, was completed and distributed to appropriate vendors. A comprehensive Web page about the NABT was also developed and is in use. Initial feedback and comments from visitors is very positive. One of the fastest growing forms of outdoor recreation is avitourism, or birding watching, and it is expected the NABT will provide this segment of outdoor recreationists with an unparalleled bird watching experience, while also providing a significant boost to local economies.

Wildlife biologists with the Nongame Wildlife Program gave approximately 30 presentations to a variety of public groups on eagles, shorebirds, backyard wildlife habitat management, and other nongame wildlife species.

The Nongame staff is also charged with administering the permitting of falconry for the state. Sixteen new falconers were tested and approved, bringing the total number of permitted falconers in the state to 55.

This was the 13th year that completing the Alabama Hunter Education Program was mandatory for first time hunting license buyers born on or after August 1, 1977. Hunter education instructors taught approximately 400 classes totaling 4,800 hours of instruction. The courses were taught by 702 certified instructors (500 volunteers and 202 employees). Approximately 2,000 Alabamians participated in 60 youth shooting sports events that were conducted throughout the state to promote safe, responsible firearms handling and improve marksmanship skills. These one-day events are designed to introduce participants to muzzleloaders, shotguns, .22 rifles, and pellet guns.

Alabama's National Archery in the Schools Program continued to show growth and now has approximately 55 schools participating. Teachers from 100 schools have been certified to conduct the two week Olympic style archery curriculum. This program has the potential to introduce over 100,000 students to Olympic style archery each year. The second annual NASP state championship was held on April 26, 2005, and featured 479 participants from 19 schools. Teachers and school administrators have made positive statements regarding this program and report that student behavior, attendance, and attitudes have improved since implementing the NASP. The 2006 event is for April 18, 2006 in Jefferson County. Approximately 900 students are expected to participate.

This event will provide WFF with an opportunity to introduce participants to other outdoor life skills in addition to archery.

Problems and Solutions

Loss of Leased Land: The continual loss of leased land and the threat of loss for WMAs is a significant problem. During the year a significant portion of the Kinterbish WMA and smaller portions of other WMAs were withdrawn. Land lost is usually closed to the public and leased to a relatively small number of individuals. More leased land is likely to be lost in the future. The Wildlife Section will attempt to lease or purchase other lands and provide additional incentives to encourage landowners to include lands in the program. We will also continue to work with Forever Wild in an effort to purchase land for public hunting.

License Holder Database: One problem of the division shared by this section is the lack of an electronic database of license holders. Because this information is lacking, it is extremely difficult to understand our customers or to establish trend data of the hunters and anglers. The lack of a database also hampers survey work. To complete our annual hunter harvest survey we continue to have to manually search the licenses sold. It is a slow process that does not accommodate new surveys being implemented. Some improvements have been made but more are needed.

Nongame Funding: Funding for the Nongame Wildlife Program is not adequate. Revenue from the income tax check-off has leveled off. Funds from Federal initiatives are becoming available but they require a state-matching share of 25 to 50 percent. Additional sources of revenue are required to meet this need.

Wildlife Diseases: Wildlife diseases are not new but one in particular continues to demand attention. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) once thought to be a problem in only the western part of the country has been found in other areas. Its spread is linked mostly to the transportation of deer and elk. Due to the severe impact CWD can have on a deer population, we have taken several steps. We continued the random surveillance program. All deer tested were negative. We also continue participation with other agencies in a CWD Working Group. That work will continue into the next year.

Diversity in the Workforce: We have not been as successful as we had hoped in creating diversity in the section's workforce. We have participated in the SEAFWA diversity committee and have communicated our needs to university wildlife departments. This problem is not unique to Alabama and is one we will continue to work to improve.

Hunter Education: The mandatory hunter education program brought Alabama in line with the majority of states. The program is beneficial in providing information to the state's hunters. We continue to explore better delivery mechanisms to minimize scheduling conflicts. A home study option has been developed for hardship cases. A Hunter Education CD ROM program developed in coop-

eration with seven other Southeastern states has been readily accepted by instructors and students. A Hunter Education internet course was brought online in the spring of 2003. This course along with the CD-ROM has greatly improved access to the mandatory hunter education program. Volunteers continue to be an integral part of the program by teaching classes and delivering the information to students.

Public attitudes toward management of deer in Alabama have shifted from management for higher numbers of deer to management for improved quality within deer populations. Changes in seasons and bag limits have been made in order to help alleviate problems such as overpopulation, unbalanced sex ratios, and the percent of bucks and does in the harvest. Wildlife biologists continue to work with hunters to help them better understand harvest strategies and to help them develop a program to meet their goals.

Hunter Participation: Hunter participation continues to remain approximately the same over the past few years. However, over the long term, statistical numbers reveal a decrease in comparison to the percentage of the population. There are many contributing factors to this, and it is not a problem unique to Alabama. Convenient locations to hunt and shoot are part of the problem and steps to correct those problems have been mentioned. It is thought that low participation is greatest in the younger age groups. An emphasis on youth programs will continue. A computer based license distribution system would assist in obtaining and analyzing demographic information.

Future Plans

The Wildlife Section will continue operating WMAs for outdoor recreation. Every effort will be made to add acreage to WMAs, including contacts with corporate and private landowners and working with the Forever Wild program to identify appropriate tracts of land to purchase.

We will continue to improve our relationship with the non-hunting public. Legislation in the U.S. Congress has provided limited funding for nongame wildlife work. It

appears it will be some time before the comprehensive program most states prefer is passed. Any federal money that becomes available will require a state match.

Sport shooting is closely related to hunting activities, and it is important for the public to have safe areas to participate in that sport. We will continue our efforts to increase developed shooting range sites. We are anxious to form more partnerships similar to the one in Etowah County.

We plan to continue the youth dove hunting program by offering youth dove hunting sites across the state next year. This program has not only been popular with young hunters, it has opened many new areas for public hunting and has helped to create new partnerships. It has also brought national attention to our program. We will also maintain and continue to add sites to the hunting trail for people with physical disabilities.



Budget and Expenditures for Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division

<u>Section Name</u>	<u>Budgeted Amount*</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
Administrative	\$804,878	\$685,379
Enforcement	\$10,686,438	\$9,625,294
Fisheries	\$6,436,991	\$5,959,995
Wildlife	\$8,356,190	\$7,590,035
Wildlife Diversity	\$1,201,666	\$578,168
<u>Transferred to Department</u>		
Administrative Transfer	\$1,960,652	\$1,960,652
Advertising Campaign	\$600,000	\$620,228
Total	\$30,046,815	\$27,019,751

**Funding includes Federal Aid in Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration monies apportioned to Alabama based on the state's geographical size and hunting and fishing license sales.*



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